

## Practitioner Insights: Occupational Safety and Health State Programs Have Their Own Agendas

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A new administration means changes across the executive branch, including the Department of Labor, which oversees the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. What we know so far: Alexander Acosta will likely be the next Secretary of Labor. Acosta is President Donald Trump's second pick for the position after Andrew Puzder, CEO of CKE Restaurants, resigned from the nomination process. Acosta has experience serving on the National Labor Relations Board and as a U.S. Attorney in Florida. He also has worked on the corporate side as an employment attorney. Unlike Puzder—a CEO with business interests in mind—Acosta is likely to have a balanced attitude towards the Labor Department's imposition of regulations on businesses. The Trump administration, however, has made it clear that a key goal over the next four years in office will be to reduce regulation generally and to control regulatory costs.

The new administration could shift OSHA's focus from aggressive enforcement to compliance assistance and cooperative programs that benefit employers. The agency also could experience budget cuts, and regulations recently passed by the Obama administration may be repealed using the Congressional Review Act. The Department of Labor's 2016 budget was \$45.7 billion, but just \$552 million went to OSHA.

OSHA's budget request for fiscal year 2017 includes a \$42 million increase over 2016 levels and 100 additional full-time staff, with the largest share of the requested increase—nearly \$18 million and 60 full-time staff members—to be dedicated to federal enforcement efforts. But the House Committee on Appropriations approved a bill that set the Labor Department's at \$138 million less than the 2016 enacted level, with OSHA's budget dropping to \$534 million.

**Excerpted from *Bloomberg BNA*. To read the full article, please [click here](#).**