

Establishing and Maintaining a Positive Labor Management Relationship



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DOL Labor Relations: Background



- DOL has approximately 18,000 employees
- Three (3) Bargaining Units
 - National Council of Field Labor Locals (NCFLL) - approximately 7800 BUEs
 - AFGE Local 12 – approximately 3200 BUEs
 - National Union of Labor Investigators (NULI) – 113 BUEs
- NCFLL has the longest standing labor relationship with DOL—dating back to 1965

LMR Since 2013



- Immediately after Secretary Perez arrived in 2013, the LR focus shifted.
- As a result of his collaborative vision Labor Management Relations at DOL has improved dramatically in the last three years.
- And, it took a lot of work.

Keys to Success: Leadership Involvement



- **Leadership Involvement and Buy-In**
 - Secretary Perez made employee engagement one of his top internal management priorities since he took the helm at DOL.
 - The Chief Human Capital Officer and the Presidents of the three DOL unions supported the vision and the engagement initiatives, which proved challenging to implement due to required cultural shifts.
 - Despite pockets of resistance from Agency management, senior leadership made it clear that the unions must be involved and change was coming.

Keys to Success: Leadership Involvement



- **Chief of Staff Seema Nanda was also very involved in the implementation of major employee engagement initiatives.**
- **CHCO traveled throughout the country to attend all employee listening sessions with joint union participation, and union stewards training to hear employee concerns directly.**
- **Senior leadership present at Labor Forums.**

Keys to Success: Mutual Respect



- In order to build and maintain a strong labor management relationship, both sides must respect each other's role in the process:
 - Identify mutual interests
 - Over-share information
 - Be transparent in all communications
 - Respect must be found at all levels – in both the management ranks and union.

Keys to Success: Transparency and Communication



- Giving a heads-up on upcoming initiatives and/or items of dispute (institutional grievances; ULPs, etc.).
- Informal Resolution of Grievances, Arbitrations and ULPs.
 - Settlement discussions twice per year
- Weekly calls to discuss matters of concern.
- Expanded case reviews with NCFLL Arbitration Committee, which successfully reduced docket.

Keys to Success: Normalize PDI



- **DOL has normalized PDI and union involvement at the earliest possible stages:**
 - **Forums**
 - ❖ Twice per year in N.O. with senior NCFLL leadership
 - ❖ Twice per year in regions with regional union leadership
 - ❖ Opportunity to discuss (face-to-face) items of concern, timely and potentially resolve otherwise costly disputes
 - LR practitioners encourage Agency management to engage in PDI and share initiatives early.
 - Periodic meetings between the Secretary and senior union leadership.

LM Relations: Pilot then Codify



- The Department took on an approach of piloting labor management or workforce engagement activities and, depending on the success of those activities, working to codify and institutionalize them.
 - Labor Forums
 - Repository of Opportunities and Details (ROAD)
 - Workplace Flexibilities

Challenges to Success



- **Lack of support from agency managers, supervisors, and certain elected union officials**
- **Resistance to change on both sides**
- **Perceived loss of control**
- **Resources – Budgetary and Time**

Overcoming the Challenges



- **Management and Union Responsibility**
 - Tackle resistance head-on one person at a time
 - CHCO and subordinate management willingness to take on Agency management and “do the right thing”
 - ❖ Resolve outstanding cases through settlement despite

- **Cultural Changes**
 - Training, training, training and joint training!
 - Timely communication with constituents

Overcoming the Challenges



- **Resource Implications**

- You must devote the time necessary to make this work.
- Recognize that while you may have upfront costs, ultimately you will realize savings from reduced litigation costs

- **Fundamental Differences**

- Agree to Disagree and move forward
- Don't allow one blowout argument to ruin the relationship

- **Mutual “Lobbying”**

- Some union and management leaders at the local levels believe in the ‘conventional way’ – traditional bargaining; adversarial relationship, etc.
- We work together to address them when they arise.

Why do this?



- **BECAUSE YOU CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO!**

It's About the Relationship

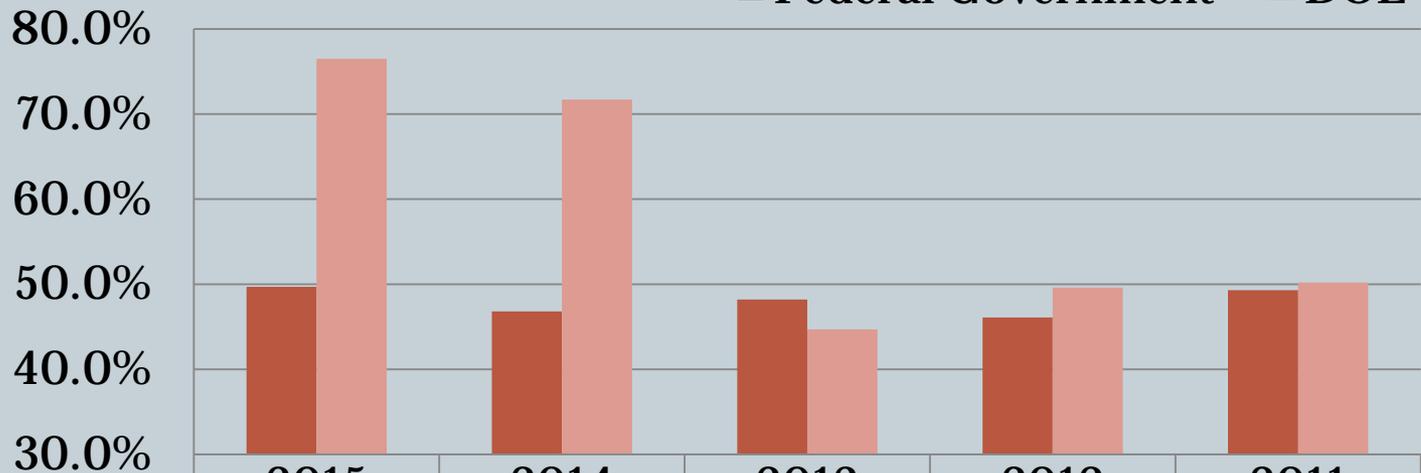


- **By design and intent this is not a data heavy process**
- **Metrics do show DOL is moving in the right direction:**
 - Increase in EVS participation
 - Union Presidents partnered and encouraged their members to participate and make their voices heard.
 - Workplace Flexibilities Program informal dispute resolution process
 - ❖ Zero grievances
 - Sequestration: Time off awards for employees rather than cash
 - Expedited Term Bargaining

FEVS Response Rate - DOL vs. Federal Government



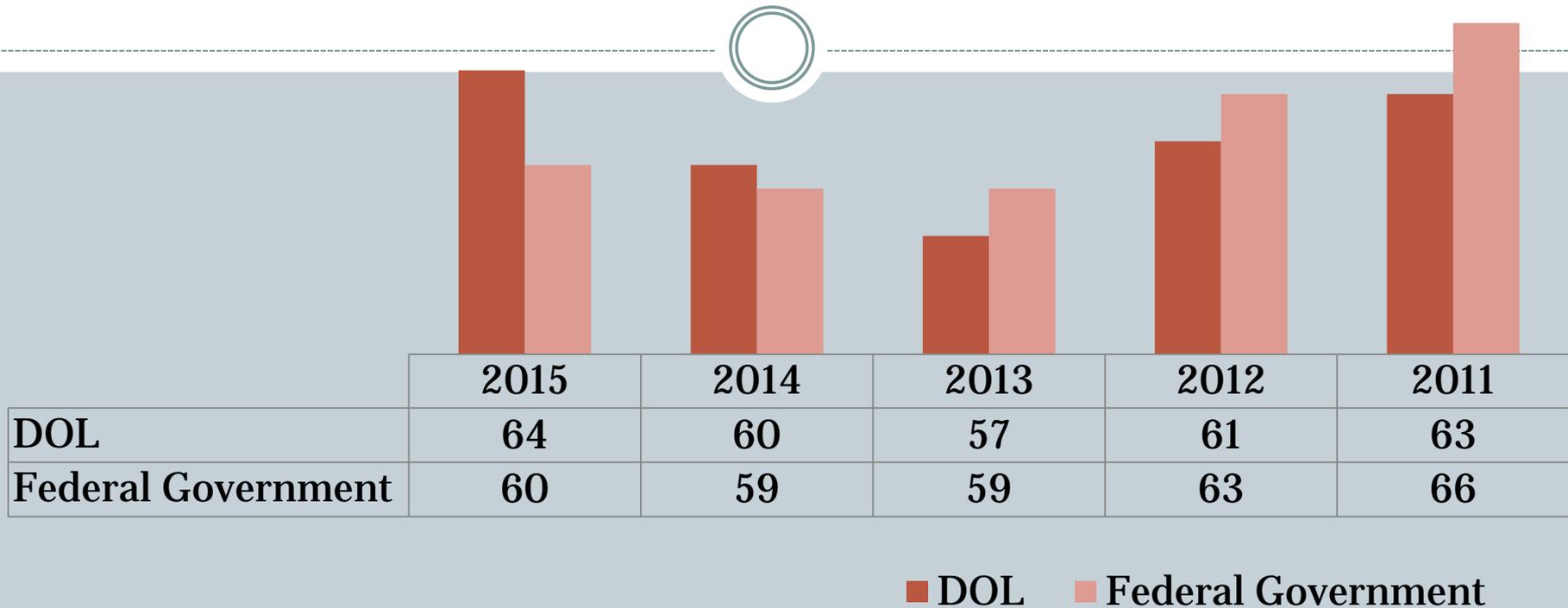
■ Federal Government ■ DOL



Federal Government	49.7%	46.8%	48.2%	46.1%	49.3%
DOL	76.5%	71.7%	44.7%	49.6%	50.2%

- In response to DOL-wide Employee Engagement initiatives, between 2013 and 2015, the response rate increased by more than 30% from 44.7% and 76.5%, far outpacing the Federal government response rate.

EVS Index - Global Satisfaction Index



- While global satisfaction remained fairly steady Federal government-wide between 2013 and 2015, DOL's scores increased during the same period from 57 to 64, an increase of 7% over a two year period in direct correlation to the implementation of DOL-wide engagement initiatives.

Takeaway



- **This is not hard.**
- **It's cheaper and easier (less confrontation) to maintain a collaborative and positive labor management relationship than a contentious one.**
- **The ultimate goal is the same, and we choose to work together on how we get there.**