



The Nation

Labor Department Sees More Cases of Embezzled Union Funds

By Monisha Bansal
CNSNews.com Senior Staff Writer
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(CNSNews.com) - The Department of Labor said the number of cases of embezzled union dues has increased over the last year.

The Office of Labor Management Standards (OLMS) recently released its enforcement data. The totals for fiscal year 2008 - which began on Oct. 1, 2007 - now stand at 49 convictions, 57 indictments, and court-ordered restitution of \$1,251,798.

According to the Labor Department, "The bulk of the cases involved the embezzlement of union funds.

"These totals represent increases of 20 percent (41 to 49) in convictions and 39 percent (41 to 57) in indictments over fiscal year 2007," the department noted.

"This financial restitution, as well as the convictions and indictments, highlight the vital role OLMS plays in protecting America's union members," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor Management Standards Don Todd.

"We continue to be proud of our work to eliminate wrongdoing against unions, and our efforts have resulted in the successful prosecution of almost 850 individuals since 2001. We also have obtained almost 900 indictments and obtained court orders of restitution for more than \$103 million in that time," Dodd said.

"These statistics demonstrate why labor leaders have invested so much time and money convincing Congress to gut the Office of Labor Management Standards funding," said Justin Wilson, a senior research analyst at the Center for Union Facts.

"When it comes to corporations or government, unions are the first in line to demand transparency," he told **Cybercast News Service**. "But when it comes to their own dirty laundry, they have fought tooth and nail to keep their own members in the dark."

A pro-labor group, however, said the Labor Department has become hostile towards workers under Labor Secretary Elaine Chao.

"Under Elaine, the Department of Labor has created excessive demands on labor unions while giving corporate America a free pass," a spokesman for American Rights at Work told **Cybercast News Service**.

"Furthermore, the increase in funding for OLMS has come at the expense of critical safety agencies - many of which are already grossly under-funded and incapable of adequately serving America's workers," the spokesman added.

"The clear anti-union ideology held by Secretary Chao is impeding the progress of America's workers," the group concluded.