PCCA Supports Senate Legislation to Block Duplicative Federal Heat Rule

The Heat Workforce Standards Act of 2026, introduced April 29, 2026, by Senators Bill Cassidy (R-La.), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, Jim Risch (R-Idaho), and six Republican senators, represents a significant effort in Congress to halt a sweeping federal workplace heat regulation that could have far-reaching impacts on contractors and infrastructure builders across the country.

The legislation would prohibit the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) from finalizing or enforcing the Biden administration's proposed Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rule on heat injury and illness prevention. It would also prevent future administrations from advancing a substantially similar standard.

According to Senate HELP Committee Republicans, the bill is intended to protect American workers and employers from what they describe as an overly prescriptive federal mandate that could jeopardize jobs, particularly in industries like construction, energy, and infrastructure development.

This comes after Chairman Cassidy led 15 Republican senators in a March 11, 2026, letter to the U.S. DOL raising concerns about the Biden proposed rule.

A One-Size-Fits-All Standard Raises Industry Concerns

The proposed OSHA heat rule—formally titled Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings—would impose extensive new requirements on employers across a wide range of industries. These include mandated heat safety plans, acclimatization protocols, rest break requirements, training obligations, and detailed recordkeeping.

As outlined in a recent coalition letter signed by PCCA and dozens of national trade associations, the rule takes a "one-size-fits-all" approach that does not adequately account for regional climate differences or the diverse nature of construction jobsites.

For contractors operating across multiple states and environments, such rigidity could introduce compliance challenges and operational inefficiencies without necessarily improving worker safety outcomes.

PCCA Joins Broad Industry Coalition

PCCA joined a broad coalition of business and industry organizations in supporting the Heat Workforce Standards Act, emphasizing the need for a more balanced and flexible approach to heat safety.

The coalition letter highlights that contractors and employers already take heat-related risks seriously and have implemented practical, jobsite-specific safety measures to protect workers. However, the proposed OSHA rule would impose new mandates and administrative burdens that could disrupt these existing practices while adding significant compliance costs.

Importantly, the coalition also warned that the rule could create confusion for workers and employers alike by layering rigid federal requirements on top of existing safety programs and government policies.

Supporting Safety Without Sacrificing Flexibility

PCCA and its members recognize that heat exposure is a legitimate safety concern that must be addressed. However, the association supports policies that allow contractors to tailor safety practices to real-world conditions, including geography, project type, and workforce needs.

By contrast, critics of the OSHA proposal argue that overly prescriptive federal standards risk undermining safety by limiting employer flexibility and responsiveness in dynamic jobsite environments.

“OSHA already requires employers to protect workers from temperature-related hazards under the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act,” PCCA advocate Ben Brubeck said. “This calls into question the value of the Biden proposed regulation, as well as similar laws and regulations passed by state and local governments that is creating a confusing patchwork of heat standards for employers.”

“If the DOL moves forward with a revised heat rule, DOL does not have the authority—nor does Congress have the votes and will—to enact policy preempting local heat rules for a national standard,” Brubeck said. “For employers, that means this confusing patchwork of local and state regulations will continue to evolve, but if this bill were to become law, it would at least block another layer of policy caused by a federal heat rule.”

Recently, the Trump administration launched a program ensuring that employers and workers know how to comply with existing laws and that workplaces mitigate extreme heat hazards.

Looking Ahead

As Congress considers the Heat Workforce Standards Act, the debate is likely to center on how best to balance worker safety with regulatory practicality.

More than 43,000 comments were submitted by the public on the Biden proposed rule by

December 30, 2024, including comments from the Construction Industry Safety Coalition and the Coalition for Workplace Safety reflecting the construction industry's broad concerns with the proposal.

After President Trump's election, the Trump DOL encouraged industry and the public to participate in numerous public hearings held by OSHA in 2025 examining the Biden heat rule. On October 30, 2025, the Coalition for Workplace Safety filed comments again.

For PCCA, the priority remains clear: ensuring that policies designed to protect workers also work in practice for the contractors responsible for building and maintaining America's critical infrastructure.

PCCA and industry partners will continue to engage with lawmakers and regulators to advocate for effective, flexible, and commonsense approaches to workplace safety.