

Sharon Block to Join Harvard's Labor and Worklife Program as Executive Director

Sharon Block, currently the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor and Senior Counselor to the Secretary of Labor, will be the new Executive Director of Harvard University's [Labor and Worklife Program](#). She will join faculty co-directors Richard Freeman and Benjamin Sachs and staff members Lorette Baptiste, Larry Beeferman and John Trumbour at the Program. Block will succeed Elaine Bernard, who has successfully served in the role of Executive Director since 1989.

"We are delighted that someone with Sharon Block's extensive experience and deep insight into the issues facing 21st Century workers will become the Labor and Worklife Program's new director," said Sachs, the Kestnbaum Professor of Labor and Industry at Harvard Law School. "We welcome Sharon to Harvard and look forward to building together on the superb work the Program has done under Elaine Bernard's leadership."

For twenty years, Block has held key labor policy positions across the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. Early in her career she worked as an attorney at the National Labor Relations Board, and returned to the NLRB in 2012 when she was appointed to serve as a member of the Board by President Obama. She was senior counsel to the Senate HELP committee under Senator Edward Kennedy, playing a central role in the debate over the Employee Free Choice Act. She has held senior positions in the U.S. Department of Labor throughout her career.

Recently, as head of the policy office at the Department of Labor, Block hosted - with Wage and Hour Administrator David Weil and Open Societies Foundation's Ken Zimmerman - the Department's three-day symposium on the Future of Work. The symposium brought together a wide array of thought leaders to address how changes in labor markets and business models have impacts on key issues such as enforcement, labor standards, workforce development, employee benefits, and data in the U.S. and around the world. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez stated:

Sharon has been a trusted advisor, a tireless leader and an invaluable member of our team at the Labor Department as we have tackled the challenges facing working people. She has dedicated her entire career to improving the lives of workers and their families, and I am thrilled that she will lead the Labor and Worklife program and continue to make progress toward an economy that works for everyone.

While serving in the Obama White House as Senior Public Engagement Advisor for Labor and Working Families, Block led the historic White House Summit on Worker Voice, which explored ways for workers to fully participate in their economic future. At the President's direction, Block also conducted a series of regional worker voice summits across the country.

David Weil, Administrator of the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, author of *The Fissured Workplace*, and longtime faculty member of the Labor and Worklife Program, also praised Block. Weil said:

Sharon Block brings a wealth of knowledge on labor law and policy from a career that has put her in a front row seat on policies affecting working people. She also brings a fresh perspective on the challenges and opportunities for giving workers a voice at the workplace through new organizations, policy approaches, and innovations. She will bring energy and new perspectives to continue the rich and creative legacy of Elaine Bernard as the next Executive Director of the Harvard Law School Labor and Worklife Program.

Block will assume the Executive Director position in early 2017. "I'm honored to become a part of the proud tradition of the Labor and Worklife Program in developing the next generation of labor leaders and advocates, and to partner with Professors Sachs and Freeman and the Program's staff in helping us navigate the challenges of the 21st century workplace," she said.