

Media Advisory
JPL Employees vs Caltech, NASA and Department of Commerce
Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12

Contact: Robert M. Nelson, Lead Plaintiff. 818-634-3316, rmnelson2@earthlink.net

UPDATE:

Three new developments have occurred regarding the legal action brought by 28 JPL employees on 30 August 2007 in which they asked a federal court for injunctive relief protection from the implementation of Homeland Security Presidential Directive #12.

HSPD#12 is one of a series of Executive Orders signed by President Bush in 2004. Implementation plans call for intrusive background checks and fingerprinting of all federal employees and contractors. Employees must sign a waiver 'voluntarily' consenting to these background investigations. If they refuse they will lose their jobs.

1. Change in court dates The dates for the injunction hearing have been changed. The argument for preliminary injunctive relief is now scheduled for Oct. 1, 2007 at 4 p.m. in Courtroom 11 of the Federal Court in Los Angeles. Hon. Otis D. Wright II is the presiding judge. All the court documents are available at <http://hspd12jpl.org/>

2. Women Scientist's and Engineers ask for Senate Investigation. Eight women scientists at JPL have written a letter of concern to all female members of the United States Senate. Their concern is that NASA's insistence that employees 'volunteer' for these background checks (or face termination) under HSPD12 is similar to sexual workplace harassment situations of years past.

"We as women clearly understand a well-known variant of this threat, sexual harassment, which hampered our advancement in the workplace for decades. Those who stood on their principles and failed to acquiesce lost their jobs. Fortunately, strong judicial and legislative sanctions largely relegated this practice to the unwelcome past. This raises the obvious question: would anyone in government tolerate a policy that asks us to waive our protections against sexual harassment in exchange for being retained or promoted? We think you would be as concerned as we are regarding a policy that is an abuse-of employment practice." See attached letter.

Contacts:

Dr. Linda J. Spilker 818-636-0819

Dr. Amanda R. Hendrix 310-922-3414

3. Online Statement of Concern from Other JPL Employees.

More than 100 JPL employees have signed an on line statement saying that while they already have or might ultimately sign the waivers consenting to be investigated they are doing this only under economic duress to maintain their livelihoods. "We are concerned about its stifling effect on attracting the best talent to JPL. We see no reasonable grounds for the government's unprecedented and unfettered intrusion into the private affairs of JPL employees and contractors." Full text at <http://hspd12jpl.org/>.

Contact

Dr. David Diner at 626-355-4377