



OSH Heads-Up

Tri-State Occupational Health and WORKSAFE IOWA

A Balancing Act

This wife and mother has a lot on her plate, as they say. Balancing work and family makes her similar to so many other American women—even if most aren't hosting a White House Forum on Workplace Flexibility.



Arrangements involving when one works, where one works, or how much one works (including time off after childbirth or other life events) can help men and women better meet both their job demands and family needs. And as Mrs. Obama's husband rightly pointed out at the March event, "Workplace flexibility isn't just a women's issue. It's an issue that affects the well-being of our families and the success of our businesses."

In 2007 over one-half of employers reported allowing at least some workers to periodically change their starting and quitting times, although only about 20% of employers permit working from home on a regular basis. Research has shown resulting benefits such as lower absenteeism and turnover, improved worker health, and higher productivity.

Small business owners, business leaders, policy experts, workers and labor leaders participated with senior administration officials in the March forum. In addition, the President's Council of Economic Advisers prepared a report that presents the current state of flexible work arrangements.

White House - Council on Women and Girls (A Conversation on Workplace Flexibility) - www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/03/31/economics-workplace-flexibility

Council of Economic Advisors ("Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility") - www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/100331-cea-economics-workplace-flexibility.pdf