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Statement concerning filing of class action for fraud and unpaid wages against Wackenhut Services International (WSI) and KBR who conspired to deny payment for work and on call time of thousands of firefighters in last five years

Scott Bloch files complaint for \$100 million against two major government contractors on behalf of thousands of former firefighters for unpaid wages

WASHINGTON, DC (December 06, 2011) – Firefighters working in Iraq and Afghanistan have been unpaid millions of dollars of required work, overtime, on call time, and other benefits of employment under LOGCAP contracts of KBR/Halliburton and Wackenhut Services International (WSI). The workers complained but were threatened with termination if they did not go along and provide the 24/7 fire coverage on bases even though they had to donate hundreds of hours of time apiece. Scott Bloch, along with Michael Trevelline, both Washington, D.C. attorneys, brought the action to remedy this injustice.

KBR was not the direct supervisor of these firefighters but that did not stop them from issuing them orders directly to do work they were not paid for. KBR would also instruct management of WSI to provide firefighters 24/7 by having them on call, bringing them out in the middle of the night, but paying them only a fraction of their overtime, on call time, or higher graded work they were required to perform.

When firefighters brought this up with their superiors, they were given the line, “Chicken or Beef, aisle or window,” referring to their choices when they were sent home and fired. “This was the common phrase to keep these brave firefighters from being paid,” said Bloch, “and it worked most of the time. Coercion is a lot cheaper than following the law or the contract.” KBR is accused of conspiring to prevent the firefighters from being paid under the theory that they controlled WSI, it was their contract with the government and they obtained services and were unjustly enriched by not having to pay for it.

“This was and still is an illegal scheme by the defendants,” Bloch said, “and it is a discredit to the many fine men and women who have contributed their time and talents in our adventures overseas. It is high time they were paid, and not strongarmed into unjust settlements under cover of darkness.”

The lawsuit explains that there was a previous class action that was submitted to arbitration and rather than pay firefighters a reasonable percentage of their missing pay, they paid a

couple of percentage points to the firefighters, based on a fraction of only one year's wages, rushed the process through, and provided misleading notices to firefighters. "Some were not even contacted," said Bloch, "and yet they're being told they have no rights. But the law may have something to say about that."

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