



Cornell University  
ILR School  
Labor and Employment Law Program

## Whistleblower Retaliation: Significant Changes for Employers and Employees

Thursday, April 11, 2013

### **M. Patricia Smith**

**M. Patricia Smith** was confirmed by the Senate as the Solicitor of Labor on February 4, 2010, and assumed her duties on March 1, 2010. Prior to becoming the Solicitor of Labor, Ms. Smith was the New York State Commissioner of Labor since March 6, 2007.

Prior to serving as Commissioner of Labor she served as Chief of the Labor Bureau in the Office of the New York State Attorney General for eight years. In that position, she developed a system of active government labor law enforcement that became a model for other Attorneys General and enforcement agencies.

For 11 years, Commissioner Smith served as Deputy Bureau Chief and Section Chief of the Labor Bureau, conducting and overseeing all aspects of labor law litigation involving New York State, in state and federal trial and appellate courts. In 1996 and 1997 she argued and won two Employment Retirement Income Security Act cases before the United States Supreme Court.

Before joining the Office of the Attorney General, Commissioner Smith worked for various Legal Services Organizations representing unemployment claimants, minimum wage workers, workers in federal job training programs and job seekers.

She graduated, cum laud from Trinity College in Washington, D.C. in 1974 and from New York University School of Law, with honors, in 1977.