

The Aftermath: Developments From The 2014 Session of The Connecticut General Assembly Affecting The Workplace

Working Together

05.14.2014

By Mark Sommaruga

The 2014 session of the Connecticut General Assembly has just concluded. The following is a cursory description of bills that were passed by the General Assembly that may be of interest. A more detailed summary of these enactments will be forthcoming.

S.B. No. 32/PUBLIC ACT No. 14-1: AN ACT CONCERNING WORKING FAMILIES' WAGES. This Act increases the minimum wage from the current \$8.75/hour to \$9.15/hour on January 1, 2015, \$9.65/hour on January 1, 2016 and \$10.10/per hour on January 1, 2017.

S.B. No. 61: AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND LIABILITY FOR HOSPITAL SERVICES. This bill will make certain changes regarding employer liability under the Workers' Compensation Act for hospital services. Specifically, instead of paying for the costs of actual services rendered (or a discount rate that may have been negotiated between the carrier and the provider), this bill will require the Workers Compensation Commission to establish by January 1, 2015 Medicare-based rates for payments for hospital services, along with services rendered at ambulatory surgical centers.

S.B. No. 64 /PUBLIC ACT No. 14-42: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION AND AMENDMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STATUTES. This Act makes technical changes to obsolete Connecticut Department of Labor statutes and repeals outdated reporting requirements. However, this Act also expands certain Connecticut Employment and Training Commission job placement program reporting requirements, and mandates certain procedures for sharing information between the Department of Labor, the Department of Social Services, and the CT Health Insurance Exchange regarding eligibility for certain public assistance programs.

S.B. No. 221: AN ACT CONCERNING CREDIT CHECKS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. This bill, which takes effect on October 1, 2014, will add mortgage brokers and other mortgage servicers to the definition of "financial institution" for the purposes of employer inquiries about employee (and prospective employee) credit ratings.

pullcom.com  @pullmancomley

BRIDGEPORT
203.330.2000

HARTFORD
860.424.4300

SPRINGFIELD
413.314.6160

WAKEFIELD
401-360-1533

WATERBURY
203.573.9700

WESTPORT
203.254.5000

WHITE PLAINS
914.705.5355

The Aftermath: Developments From The 2014 Session of The Connecticut General Assembly Affecting The Workplace

S.B. No. 318/PUBLIC ACT No. 14-44: AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC PREVAILING WAGE NOTICES, INFORMATION AND RECORDS. This Act, which takes effect on July 1, 2015, will permit certain “prevailing wage” notices, information and records to be provided or maintained electronically.

H.B. No. 5453: AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYERS AND HOME CARE WORKERS. This bill, which takes effect on January 1, 2015, will amend Connecticut’s wage standards act so as to allow employers and individuals employed in domestic service to agree to exclude an eight hour regularly-scheduled sleeping period from the calculation of regular pay under certain circumstances.

H.B. No. 5527: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TASK FORCE ON DOMESTIC WORKERS. The bill establishes a domestic workers task force, which will study issues involving domestic workers in the state and make recommendations (via a report to be submitted not later than October 1, 2015) for legislative initiatives to provide outreach and education services to domestic workers and employers of domestic workers.

H.B. No. 5269: AN ACT CREATING PARITY BETWEEN PAID SICK LEAVE BENEFITS AND OTHER EMPLOYER-PROVIDED BENEFITS. This bill, which takes effect on January 1, 2015, will 1) add radiological technicians to the coverage under Connecticut’s paid sick leave law, 2) allow employers to administer benefits under the law based upon a 365 day period, instead of mandating a calendar year period, 3) calculate whether an employer meets the 50 employee minimum threshold for coverage under the law based upon the number of employees in the week containing October 1, and 4) specifically prohibit an employer from terminating or transferring any employee solely in order to avoid meeting the 50 employee threshold for coverage under the law. For more discussion of the impact of this bill, please see our earlier post.

S.B. No. 412: AN ACT CONCERNING THE ENFORCEMENT OF CERTAIN OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING STATUTES. This bill, which takes effect on October 1, 2014, will further specify the responsibilities of the Commissioner of Consumer Protection and examining boards regarding occupational licensing enforcement, including the dismissal of complaints and allowing a civil penalty to be imposed for **each** specific violation of the licensing statutes.

H.B. No. 5377: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE REEMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS AS THEY RELATE TO THE LABOR DEPARTMENT. This bill requires the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission to coordinate an electronic state hiring campaign to encourage the reemployment of workers fifty years of age or older, to be administered through the Connecticut Department of Labor’s Internet web site. This bill, among other things, also requires the Department to develop or approve by January 1, 2015: 1) a one-page quick-reference guide summarizing the public and private resources available for unemployed workers fifty years of age or older within the state, and 2) an informational campaign to distribute to Workforce Investment Boards, CTWorks One Stop Career Centers and similar job centers within the state that will include a description of the program of apprentice training maintained in the Department.

The Aftermath: Developments From The 2014 Session of The Connecticut General Assembly Affecting The Workplace

H.B. No. 5596/PUBLIC ACT No. 14-47: AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015. Among other things, this “budget” bill exempts a portion of state teachers' retirement system (TRS) income from the income tax, specifically by allowing taxpayers to deduct/exclude from gross income 10% of TRS income for the 2015 tax year, 25% for the 2016 tax year, and 50% for 2017 and subsequent tax years.

H.B. No. 5597: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS OF THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2015. Among other things, the so-called budget “implementer” bill creates the Connecticut Retirement Security Board and requires it to (1) conduct a feasibility study on implementing a “public retirement plan” and (2) develop a comprehensive proposal for implementing the plan that must include certain goals and features. The bill allows municipalities to issue bonds to pay for unfunded past pension obligations. If a municipality issues such bonds, it must appropriate money for, and contribute to its pension plan, at least the actuarially required contribution in each fiscal year that it has outstanding bonds for the plan. The bill makes members of the UConn and UConn Health Center (UCHC) Police Departments unclassified (instead of classified) state employees.

Posted in CT General Assembly (CGA), Workers' Compensation

Tags: Municipal Employees