

They're Back! What Should Employers Expect from the 2019 Connecticut General Assembly Session?

Working Together

01.10.2019

By Mark Sommaruga

On January 9, the 2019 session of the Connecticut General Assembly began. The session is scheduled to adjourn on June 5, 2019. Numerous proposed bills affecting Connecticut employers and employees will be unleashed during the session, many of which will never see the light of day.

The General Assembly's Labor and Public Employees Committee will be where much of the action initially occurs. Hearings on those bills deemed worthy by the Committee will likely take place in February and early March. While not yet firmly scheduled, the deadline for the Committee to approve and "forward" bills out of Committee will be sometime in mid- to late March. Bills affecting labor and employment issues may also emerge from other committees (such as the Judiciary Committee).

Understanding that it is difficult to forecast with certainty what action(s) the General Assembly will ultimately take, legislation concerning the following matters may receive serious consideration:

- 1) revisions to Connecticut's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), including a program of paid FMLA leave;
- 2) increases to the minimum wage and efforts to increase penalties for employers of "low wage" workers who violate wage and hour laws;
- 3) gender pay "equity";
- 4) revisions to sexual harassment training, posting and policy requirements for employers;
- 5) revisions to the procedures and remedies available through the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
- 6) limitations on non-competition clauses in contracts;
- 7) expansion of paid sick leave; and
- 8) workers' compensation coverage for severe emotional trauma;

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Many of these subjects were addressed in prior years via legislation that was passed by a committee (and even one house of the General Assembly) but did not make it to the Governor's desk. The change in the partisan divide in the General Assembly may result in some of this proposed legislation (especially bills with a "pro-employee/pro-labor" or "progressive" bent) actually passing this year.

Working Together will follow the action at the General Assembly and report on any significant developments as they may occur. There is always the potential for last minute surprises, including bill provisions emerging with little or no debate. Stay tuned.

Posted in Leave, Workers' Compensation

Tags: CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), Minimum Wage, Sexual Harassment