
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5478

AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL AND MINOR CHANGES TO THE LABOR DEPARTMENT STATUTES.

SUMMARY

This bill caps the maximum weekly unemployment benefit at 50% of the average wage of all workers in the state, rather than the current method of 60% of the average wage paid to the state's production (i.e., manufacturing) workers. The impact of the revised calculation on benefit amounts is uncertain.

It also:

1. eliminates two Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) reporting requirements,
2. exempts registered pre-apprentices from the law's prohibition on minors 16 or over but under 18 working in certain hazardous occupations, and
3. makes numerous minor and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2108

§§ 1-5, 11 & 12 — TECHNICAL CHANGES

The bill makes technical and conforming changes.

§§ 6 & 7 — CONNECTICUT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION

Employment and Training Coordination Plan

Under existing law, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) must carry out a number of duties related to employment and training programs in the state. The bill eliminates one duty, to develop a written plan for the coordination of state employment and training programs.

Career Certificate and Early College Opportunity Programs Report

The bill eliminates an annual requirement, beginning September 1, 2018, that CETC report on the status of the plan to implement, expand, or improve on career certificate programs, middle college programs, early college high school programs, and the Connecticut Early College Opportunity program to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. The programs, unchanged by the bill, provide education, training, and placement in jobs available in various job sectors.

§ 8 — MINORS WORKING IN HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS

The bill exempts registered pre-apprentices from the law's prohibition on minors 16 or over, but under age 18, working in certain hazardous occupations. It applies to pre-apprenticeships in manufacturing or mechanical establishments, technical education and career schools, and public schools. Under the bill, a pre-apprentice is a person, student, or minor (1) employed under a written agreement with an apprenticeship sponsor for a term of training and employment up to 2,000 hours or 24 months long and (2) registered with the Department of Labor (DOL).

The bill also limits the current law's exemption for apprentices to those who are registered with DOL.

§ 9 — WAGE COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS

The bill expands the type of DOL personnel who can be sent to investigate a wage complaint. Current law authorizes the DOL commissioner, DOL's wage and workplace standards director, and DOL's wage enforcement agents to enter an employer's place of business to investigate compliance with wage payment laws. The bill allows the director to assign such authority to his designees (which can include wage enforcement agents and wage and hour investigators).

§ 10 — UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS CAP

This bill caps the maximum weekly unemployment benefit at 50% of the average wage of all workers in the state, rather than the current method of 60% of the average wage paid to the state's production (i.e.,

manufacturing) workers, as determined under the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' standards for determining average production wages. Under the bill, the average wage of all workers in the state is calculated under the Connecticut Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages or another method prescribed by the labor commissioner that accurately reflects the average wage of workers in the state.

Under current law, the average wage is determined for each year ending June 30. The bill instead requires determination for each year ending March 31. By law, unchanged by the bill, the commissioner must annually determine a new cap by August 15. It becomes effective on the first Sunday of October, but cannot increase more than \$18 each year.

§ 13 — REPEALER

The bill repeals the laws creating the Connecticut Career Ladder Advisory Committee (CGS § 4-124bb) and the Connecticut Allied Health Workforce Policy Board (CGS § 4-124dd).

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sHB 5480, favorably reported by the Labor Committee also changes the maximum benefit cap in unemployment law.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 0 (03/20/2018)