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AB-304 Sick leave: accrual and limitations. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Bill No. 304

CHAPTER 67

An act to amend Sections 245.5, 246, and 247.5 of the Labor Code, relating to employment, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor July 13, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State July 13, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 304, Gonzalez. Sick leave: accrual and limitations.

(1) The Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014 provides, among other things, that an employee who, on or after July 1, 2015, works in California for 30 or more days within a year from the commencement of employment is entitled to paid sick days for prescribed purposes, to be accrued at a rate of no less than one hour for every 30 hours worked.

This bill would require that the employee do that work for the same employer in order to qualify for accrued sick leave under these provisions. This bill would exclude a retired annuitant of a public entity, as specified, from the definition of employee under these provisions.

The bill would authorize an employer to provide for employee sick leave accrual on a basis other than one hour for each 30 hours worked, provided that the accrual is on a regular basis and the employee will have 24 hours of accrued sick leave available by the 120th calendar day of employment.

(2) Existing law entitles an employee to use accrued paid sick days beginning on the 90th day of employment. Existing law permits an employer to limit an employee's use of paid sick days to 24 hours or 3 days in each year of employment. Existing law requires an employer to provide an employee with written notice of the amount of paid sick leave available, or paid time off leave an employer provides in lieu of sick leave, as specified. Existing law provides that an employer is not required to provide additional paid sick days if the employer has a paid leave policy or paid time off policy, the employer makes available an amount of leave for specified uses, and the policy either satisfies specified accrual, carry over, and use requirements or provides no less than 24 hours or 3 days of paid sick leave for each year of employment or calendar year or 12-month basis.

This bill would authorize an employer to limit an employee's use of paid sick days to 24 hours or 3 days in each year of employment, a calendar year, or a 12-month period. This bill would, for specified industries, delay the application of the notice requirement. The bill would permit an employer who provides unlimited sick leave to its employees to satisfy notice requirements by indicating "unlimited" on the employee's itemized wage statement. The bill would require an employer to calculate paid sick leave based upon an employee's regular rate of pay, total wages divided by total hours worked in a 90-day period, or the wages for other forms of paid leave, as specified. The bill would provide that an employer is not required to reinstate accrued paid time off to an employee, rehired within one year of separation from employment, that was paid out at the time of termination, resignation, or separation. The bill would provide that an employer is not required to provide additional paid sick days if the employer has a paid leave policy or paid time off policy, the employer makes available an amount of leave applicable to

employees for specified uses, and the policy satisfies specified accrual, carry over, and use requirements, or that provided paid sick leave or paid time off to employees before January 1, 2015, as specified, or that are provided pursuant to specified provisions of law or of a memorandum understanding that meet the requirements of these provisions.

(3) Existing law requires an employer to keep records for three years documenting the hours worked and paid sick days accrued and used by an employee and to make those records available to the Labor Commissioner upon request.

This bill would provide that the employer has no obligation to inquire into or record the purposes for which an employee uses sick leave or paid time off.

(4) The bill would specify that its provisions are severable and would also make technical and conforming changes.

(5) This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 245.5 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

245.5. As used in this article:

(a) "Employee" does not include the following:

(1) An employee covered by a valid collective bargaining agreement if the agreement expressly provides for the wages, hours of work, and working conditions of employees, and expressly provides for paid sick days or a paid leave or paid time off policy that permits the use of sick days for those employees, final and binding arbitration of disputes concerning the application of its paid sick days provisions, premium wage rates for all overtime hours worked, and regular hourly rate of pay of not less than 30 percent more than the state minimum wage rate.

(2) An employee in the construction industry covered by a valid collective bargaining agreement if the agreement expressly provides for the wages, hours of work, and working conditions of employees, premium wage rates for all overtime hours worked, and regular hourly pay of not less than 30 percent more than the state minimum wage rate, and the agreement either (A) was entered into before January 1, 2015, or (B) expressly waives the requirements of this article in clear and unambiguous terms. For purposes of this subparagraph, "employee in the construction industry" means an employee performing work associated with construction, including work involving alteration, demolition, building, excavation, renovation, remodeling, maintenance, improvement, repair work, and any other work as described by Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and other similar or related occupations or trades.

(3) A provider of in-home supportive services under Section 14132.95, 14132.952, or 14132.956 of, or Article 7 (commencing with Section 12300) of Chapter 3 of Part 3 of Division 9 of, the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(4) An individual employed by an air carrier as a flight deck or cabin crew member that is subject to the provisions of Title II of the federal Railway Labor Act (45 U.S.C. Sec. 151 et seq.), provided that the individual is provided with compensated time off equal to or exceeding the amount established in paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 246.

(5) An employee of the state, city, county, city and county, district, or any other public entity who is a recipient of a retirement allowance and employed without reinstatement into his or her respective retirement system pursuant to either Article 8 (commencing with Section 21220) of Chapter 12 of Part 3 of Division 5 of Title 2 of the Government Code, or Article 8 (commencing with Section 31680) of Chapter 3 of Part 3 of Division 4 of Title 3 of the Government Code.

(b) "Employer" means any person employing another under any appointment or contract of hire and includes the state, political subdivisions of the state, and municipalities.

(c) "Family member" means any of the following:

(1) A child, which for purposes of this article means a biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis. This definition of a child is applicable regardless of age or dependency status.

(2) A biological, adoptive, or foster parent, stepparent, or legal guardian of an employee or the employee's spouse or registered domestic partner, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child.

(3) A spouse.

(4) A registered domestic partner.

(5) A grandparent.

(6) A grandchild.

(7) A sibling.

(d) "Health care provider" has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (6) of subdivision (c) of Section 12945.2 of the Government Code.

(e) "Paid sick days" means time that is compensated at the same wage as the employee normally earns during regular work hours and is provided by an employer to an employee for the purposes described in Section 246.5.

SEC. 2. Section 246 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

246. (a) An employee who, on or after July 1, 2015, works in California for the same employer for 30 or more days within a year from the commencement of employment is entitled to paid sick days as specified in this section.

(b) (1) An employee shall accrue paid sick days at the rate of not less than one hour per every 30 hours worked, beginning at the commencement of employment or the operative date of this article, whichever is later, subject to the use and accrual limitations set forth in this section.

(2) An employee who is exempt from overtime requirements as an administrative, executive, or professional employee under a wage order of the Industrial Welfare Commission is deemed to work 40 hours per workweek for the purposes of this section, unless the employee's normal workweek is less than 40 hours, in which case the employee shall accrue paid sick days based upon that normal workweek.

(3) An employer may use a different accrual method, other than providing one hour per every 30 hours worked, provided that the accrual is on a regular basis so that an employee has no less than 24 hours of accrued sick leave or paid time off by the 120th calendar day of employment or each calendar year, or in each 12-month period.

(4) An employer may satisfy the accrual requirements of this section by providing not less than 24 hours or three days of paid sick leave that is available to the employee to use by the completion of his or her 120th calendar day of employment.

(c) An employee shall be entitled to use accrued paid sick days beginning on the 90th day of employment, after which day the employee may use paid sick days as they are accrued.

(d) Accrued paid sick days shall carry over to the following year of employment. However, an employer may limit an employee's use of accrued paid sick days to 24 hours or three days in each year of employment, calendar year, or 12-month period. This section shall be satisfied and no accrual or carry over is required if the full amount of leave is received at the beginning of each year of employment, calendar year, or 12-month period. The term "full amount of leave" means three days or 24 hours.

(e) An employer is not required to provide additional paid sick days pursuant to this section if the employer has a paid leave policy or paid time off policy, the employer makes available an amount of leave applicable to employees that may be used for the same purposes and under the same conditions as specified in this section, and the policy satisfies one of the following:

(1) Satisfies the accrual, carry over, and use requirements of this section.

(2) Provided paid sick leave or paid time off to a class of employees before January 1, 2015, pursuant to a sick leave policy or paid time off policy that used an accrual method different than providing one hour per 30 hours worked, provided that the accrual is on a regular basis so that an employee, including an employee hired into that class after January 1, 2015, has no less than one day or eight hours of accrued sick leave or paid time off within three months of employment of each calendar year, or each 12-month period, and the employee was eligible to earn at least three days or 24 hours of sick leave or paid time off within nine months of employment. If an employer modifies the accrual method used in the policy it had in place prior to January 1, 2015, the employer shall comply with any accrual method set forth in subdivision (b) or provide the full amount of leave at the beginning of each year of employment, calendar year, or 12-month period. This section does not prohibit the employer from increasing the accrual amount or rate for a class of employees covered by this subdivision.

(3) Notwithstanding any other law, sick leave benefits provided pursuant to the provisions of Sections 19859 to 19868.3, inclusive, of the Government Code, or annual leave benefits provided pursuant to the provisions of Sections 19858.3 to 19858.7, inclusive, of the Government Code, or by provisions of a memorandum of understanding reached pursuant to Section 3517.5 that incorporate or supersede provisions of Section 19859 to 19868.3, inclusive, or Sections 19858.3 to 19858.7, inclusive of the Government Code, meet the requirements of this section.

(f) (1) Except as specified in paragraph (2), an employer is not required to provide compensation to an employee for accrued, unused paid sick days upon termination, resignation, retirement, or other separation from employment.

(2) If an employee separates from an employer and is rehired by the employer within one year from the date of separation, previously accrued and unused paid sick days shall be reinstated. The employee shall be entitled to use those previously accrued and unused paid sick days and to accrue additional paid sick days upon rehiring, subject to the use and accrual limitations set forth in this section. An employer is not required to reinstate accrued paid time off to an employee that was paid out at the time of termination, resignation, or separation of employment.

(g) An employer may lend paid sick days to an employee in advance of accrual, at the employer's discretion and with proper documentation.

(h) An employer shall provide an employee with written notice that sets forth the amount of paid sick leave available, or paid time off leave an employer provides in lieu of sick leave, for use on either the employee's itemized wage statement described in Section 226 or in a separate writing provided on the designated pay date with the employee's payment of wages. If an employer provides unlimited paid sick leave or unlimited paid time off to an employee, the employer may satisfy this section by indicating on the notice or the employee's itemized wage statement "unlimited." The penalties described in this article for a violation of this subdivision shall be in lieu of the penalties for a violation of Section 226. This subdivision shall apply to employers covered by Wage Order 11 or 12 of the Industrial Welfare Commission only on and after January 21, 2016.

(i) An employer has no obligation under this section to allow an employee's total accrual of paid sick leave to exceed 48 hours or 6 days, provided that an employee's rights to accrue and use paid sick leave are not limited other than as allowed under this section.

(j) An employee may determine how much paid sick leave he or she needs to use, provided that an employer may set a reasonable minimum increment, not to exceed two hours, for the use of paid sick leave.

(k) For the purposes of this section, an employer shall calculate paid sick leave using any of the following calculations:

(1) Paid sick time for nonexempt employees shall be calculated in the same manner as the regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the employee uses paid sick time, whether or not the employee actually works overtime in that workweek.

(2) Paid sick time for nonexempt employees shall be calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment.

(3) Paid sick time for exempt employees shall be calculated in the same manner as the employer calculates wages for other forms of paid leave time.

(l) If the need for paid sick leave is foreseeable, the employee shall provide reasonable advance notification. If the need for paid sick leave is unforeseeable, the employee shall provide notice of the need for the leave as soon as practicable.

(m) An employer shall provide payment for sick leave taken by an employee no later than the payday for the next regular payroll period after the sick leave was taken.

SEC. 3. Section 247.5 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

247.5. (a) An employer shall keep for at least three years records documenting the hours worked and paid sick days accrued and used by an employee, and shall allow the Labor Commissioner to access these records pursuant to the requirements set forth in Section 1174. An employer shall make these records available to an employee in the same manner as described in Section 226. If an employer does not maintain adequate records pursuant to this section, it shall be presumed that the employee is entitled to the maximum number of hours accruable under this article, unless the employer can show otherwise by clear and convincing evidence.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, an employer is not obligated to inquire into or record the purposes for which an employee uses paid leave or paid time off.

SEC. 4. The provisions of this measure are severable. If any provision of this measure or its application is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

SEC. 5. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to clarify provisions of Article 1.5 (commencing with Section 245) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Labor Code, for the purposes of ensuring an effective and smooth implementation of the Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.