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SB-1252 Wages: records: inspection and copying. (2017-2018)

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Senate Bill No. 1252

CHAPTER 464

An act to amend Section 226 of the Labor Code, relating to employment.

[Approved by Governor September 17, 2018. Filed with Secretary of State September 17, 2018.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1252, Pan. Wages: records: inspection and copying.

Existing law requires an employer, semimonthly or at the time of payment of wages, to furnish an employee, an accurate, itemized, written statement containing specified information regarding the amounts earned, hours worked, and the employee's identity, among other things, subject to certain variations. Existing law grants current and former employees of employers who are required to keep this information the right to inspect or copy records pertaining to their employment, upon reasonable request. Existing law requires an employer to respond to these requests within a specified time and prescribes a penalty of \$750 for an employer's failure to permit a current or former employee to inspect or copy records within that time, to be recovered by the employee or the Labor Commissioner.

This bill would provide that employees have the right to receive a copy of the employment records described above and apply the associated time requirements and penalty provisions in this context. The bill would state that it is declaratory of existing law.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

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

SECTION 1. Section 226 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

226. (a) An employer, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, shall furnish to his or her employee, either as a detachable part of the check, draft, or voucher paying the employee's wages, or separately if wages are paid by personal check or cash, an accurate itemized statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, except as provided in subdivision (j), (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and only the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer and, if the employer is a farm labor contractor, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 1682, the name and address of the legal entity that secured the services of the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee and, beginning July 1, 2013, if the employer is a temporary services employer as defined in Section 201.3, the rate of pay and the total hours worked for each temporary services assignment. The deductions

made from payment of wages shall be recorded in ink or other indelible form, properly dated, showing the month, day, and year, and a copy of the statement and the record of the deductions shall be kept on file by the employer for at least three years at the place of employment or at a central location within the State of California. For purposes of this subdivision, "copy" includes a duplicate of the itemized statement provided to an employee or a computer-generated record that accurately shows all of the information required by this subdivision.

(b) An employer that is required by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant to this code to keep the information required by subdivision (a) shall afford current and former employees the right to inspect or receive a copy of records pertaining to their employment, upon reasonable request to the employer. The employer may take reasonable steps to ensure the identity of a current or former employee. If the employer provides copies of the records, the actual cost of reproduction may be charged to the current or former employee.

(c) An employer who receives a written or oral request to inspect or receive a copy of records pursuant to subdivision (b) pertaining to a current or former employee shall comply with the request as soon as practicable, but no later than 21 calendar days from the date of the request. A violation of this subdivision is an infraction. Impossibility of performance, not caused by or a result of a violation of law, shall be an affirmative defense for an employer in any action alleging a violation of this subdivision. An employer may designate the person to whom a request under this subdivision will be made.

(d) This section does not apply to any employer of a person employed by the owner or occupant of a residential dwelling whose duties are incidental to the ownership, maintenance, or use of the dwelling, including the care and supervision of children, or whose duties are personal and not in the course of the trade, business, profession, or occupation of the owner or occupant.

(e) (1) An employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing and intentional failure by an employer to comply with subdivision (a) is entitled to recover the greater of all actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial pay period in which a violation occurs and one hundred dollars (\$100) per employee for each violation in a subsequent pay period, not to exceed an aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

(2) (A) An employee is deemed to suffer injury for purposes of this subdivision if the employer fails to provide a wage statement.

(B) An employee is deemed to suffer injury for purposes of this subdivision if the employer fails to provide accurate and complete information as required by any one or more of items (1) to (9), inclusive, of subdivision (a) and the employee cannot promptly and easily determine from the wage statement alone one or more of the following:

(i) The amount of the gross wages or net wages paid to the employee during the pay period or any of the other information required to be provided on the itemized wage statement pursuant to items (2) to (4), inclusive, (6), and (9) of subdivision (a).

(ii) Which deductions the employer made from gross wages to determine the net wages paid to the employee during the pay period. Nothing in this subdivision alters the ability of the employer to aggregate deductions consistent with the requirements of item (4) of subdivision (a).

(iii) The name and address of the employer and, if the employer is a farm labor contractor, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 1682, the name and address of the legal entity that secured the services of the employer during the pay period.

(iv) The name of the employee and only the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, "promptly and easily determine" means a reasonable person would be able to readily ascertain the information without reference to other documents or information.

(3) For purposes of this subdivision, a "knowing and intentional failure" does not include an isolated and unintentional payroll error due to a clerical or inadvertent mistake. In reviewing for compliance with this section, the factfinder may consider as a relevant factor whether the employer, prior to an alleged violation, has adopted and is in compliance with a set of policies, procedures, and practices that fully comply with this section.

(f) A failure by an employer to permit a current or former employee to inspect or receive a copy of records within the time set forth in subdivision (c) entitles the current or former employee or the Labor Commissioner to recover a seven-hundred-fifty-dollar (\$750) penalty from the employer.

(g) The listing by an employer of the name and address of the legal entity that secured the services of the employer in the itemized statement required by subdivision (a) shall not create any liability on the part of that legal entity.

(h) An employee may also bring an action for injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, and is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

(i) This section does not apply to the state, to any city, county, city and county, district, or to any other governmental entity, except that if the state or a city, county, city and county, district, or other governmental entity furnishes its employees with a check, draft, or voucher paying the employee's wages, the state or a city, county, city and county, district, or other governmental entity shall use no more than the last four digits of the employee's social security number or shall use an employee identification number other than the social security number on the itemized statement provided with the check, draft, or voucher.

(j) An itemized wage statement furnished by an employer pursuant to subdivision (a) shall not be required to show total hours worked by the employee if any of the following apply:

(1) The employee's compensation is solely based on salary and the employee is exempt from payment of overtime under subdivision (a) of Section 515 or any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(2) The employee is exempt from the payment of minimum wage and overtime under any of the following:

(A) The exemption for persons employed in an executive, administrative, or professional capacity provided in any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(B) The exemption for outside salespersons provided in any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(C) The overtime exemption for computer software professionals paid on a salaried basis provided in Section 515.5.

(D) The exemption for individuals who are the parent, spouse, child, or legally adopted child of the employer provided in any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(E) The exemption for participants, director, and staff of a live-in alternative to incarceration rehabilitation program with special focus on substance abusers provided in Section 8002 of the Penal Code.

(F) The exemption for any crew member employed on a commercial passenger fishing boat licensed pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 7920) of Chapter 1 of Part 3 of Division 6 of the Fish and Game Code provided in any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(G) The exemption for any individual participating in a national service program provided in any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

SEC. 2. The amendment of Section 226 of the Labor Code made by this act does not constitute a change in, but is declaratory of, existing law.