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**AB-224 Worker status: employees and independent contractors: newspaper distributors and carriers.**  
(2023-2024)

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**Assembly Bill No. 224**

**CHAPTER 298**

An act to amend Section 2783 of the Labor Code, relating to private employment.

[ Approved by Governor September 20, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 20, 2024. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 224, Blanca Rubio. Worker status: employees and independent contractors: newspaper distributors and carriers.

Existing law, as established in the case of *Dynamex Operations W. Inc. v. Superior Court* (2018) 4 Cal.5th 903 (*Dynamex*), creates a presumption that a worker who performs services for a hirer is an employee for purposes of claims for wages and benefits arising under wage orders issued by the Industrial Welfare Commission. Existing law requires a 3-part test, commonly known as the "ABC" test, to determine if workers are employees or independent contractors for those purposes.

Existing law establishes that, for purposes of the Labor Code, the Unemployment Insurance Code, and the wage orders of the Industrial Welfare Commission, a person providing labor or services for remuneration is considered an employee rather than an independent contractor unless the hiring entity demonstrates that the person is free from the control and direction of the hiring entity in connection with the performance of the work, the person performs work that is outside the usual course of the hiring entity's business, and the person is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business. This test is known as the "ABC" test, as described above. Existing law charges the Labor Commissioner with the enforcement of labor laws, including worker classification.

Existing law exempts specified occupations and business relationships from the application of *Dynamex* and the provisions described above. These exemptions include a temporary exemption for newspaper distributors working under contract with a newspaper publisher and newspaper carriers, as those terms are defined, until January 1, 2025. Existing law, as part of that temporary exemption, requires every newspaper publisher or distributor that hires or directly contracts with newspaper carriers to submit prescribed information on carrier payroll taxes, wage rates, and wage claims to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), on or before March 1, 2022, March 1, 2023, and March 1, 2024.

This bill would extend the operation of that exemption until January 1, 2030. The bill would require the information on carrier payroll taxes, wage rates, and wage claims to be reported to the LWDA on or before March 1, 2025, March 1, 2026, March 1, 2027, March 1, 2028, and March 1, 2029.

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

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 2783 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

**2783.** Section 2775 and the holding in *Dynamex* do not apply to the following occupations as defined in the paragraphs below, and instead, the determination of employee or independent contractor status for individuals in those occupations shall be governed by *Borello*:

(a) A person or organization that is licensed by the Department of Insurance pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 1621), Chapter 6 (commencing with Section 1760), or Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 1831) of Part 2 of Division 1 of the Insurance Code or a person who provides underwriting inspections, premium audits, risk management, claims adjusting, third-party administration consistent with use of the term "third-party administrator," as defined in subdivision (cc) of Section 10112.1 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations, or loss control work for the insurance and financial service industries.

(b) A physician and surgeon, dentist, podiatrist, psychologist, or veterinarian licensed by the State of California pursuant to Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code, performing professional or medical services provided to or by a health care entity, including an entity organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or professional corporation as defined in Section 13401 of the Corporations Code. Nothing in this subdivision shall circumvent, undermine, or restrict the rights under federal law to organize and collectively bargain.

(c) An individual who holds an active license from the State of California and is practicing one of the following recognized professions: lawyer, architect, landscape architect, engineer, private investigator, or accountant.

(d) A securities broker-dealer or investment adviser or their agents and representatives that are either of the following:

(1) Registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission or the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.

(2) Licensed by the State of California under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 25210) or Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 25230) of Division 1 of Part 3 of Title 4 of the Corporations Code.

(e) A direct sales salesperson as described in Section 650 of the Unemployment Insurance Code, so long as the conditions for exclusion from employment under that section are met.

(f) A manufactured housing salesperson, subject to all obligations under Part 2 (commencing with Section 18000) of Division 13 of the Health and Safety Code, including all regulations promulgated by the Department of Housing and Community Development relating to manufactured home salespersons and all other obligations of manufactured housing salespersons to members of the public. The statutorily imposed duties of a manufactured housing dealer under Section 18060.5 of the Health and Safety Code are not factors to be considered under the *Borello* test.

(g) A commercial fisher working on an American vessel.

(1) For the purposes of this subdivision:

(A) "American vessel" has the same meaning as defined in Section 125.5 of the Unemployment Insurance Code.

(B) "Commercial fisher" means a person who has a valid, unrevoked commercial fishing license issued pursuant to Article 3 (commencing with Section 7850) of Chapter 1 of Part 3 of Division 6 of the Fish and Game Code.

(C) "Working on an American vessel" means the taking or the attempt to take fish, shellfish, or other fishery resources of the state by any means, and includes each individual aboard an American vessel operated for fishing purposes who participates directly or indirectly in the taking of these raw fishery products, including maintaining the vessel or equipment used aboard the vessel. However, "working on an American vessel" does not apply to anyone aboard a licensed commercial fishing vessel as a visitor or guest who does not directly or indirectly participate in the taking.

(2) For the purposes of this subdivision, a commercial fisher working on an American vessel is eligible for unemployment insurance benefits if they meet the definition of "employment" in Section 609 of the Unemployment Insurance Code and are otherwise eligible for those benefits pursuant to the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Code.

(3) (A) On or before March 1, 2021, and each March 1 thereafter, the Employment Development Department shall issue an annual report to the Legislature on the use of unemployment insurance in the commercial fishing industry. This report shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(i) Reporting the number of commercial fishers who apply for unemployment insurance benefits.

(ii) The number of commercial fishers who have their claims disputed.

(iii) The number of commercial fishers who have their claims denied.

(iv) The number of commercial fishers who receive unemployment insurance benefits.

(B) The report required by this subparagraph shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(4) This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2026, unless extended by the Legislature.

(h) (1) A newspaper distributor working under contract with a newspaper publisher, as defined in paragraph (2), or a newspaper carrier.

(2) For purposes of this subdivision:

(A) "Newspaper" means a newspaper of general circulation, as defined in Section 6000 or 6008 of the Government Code, and any other publication circulated to the community in general as an extension of or substitute for that newspaper's own publication, whether that publication be designated a "shoppers' guide," as a zoned edition, or otherwise. "Newspaper" may also be a publication that is published in print and that may be posted in a digital format, and distributed periodically at daily, weekly, or other short intervals, for the dissemination of news of a general or local character and of a general or local interest.

(B) "Publisher" means the natural or corporate person that manages the newspaper's business operations, including circulation.

(C) "Newspaper distributor" means a person or entity that contracts with a publisher to distribute newspapers to the community.

(D) "Newspaper carrier" means a person who effects physical delivery of the newspaper to the customer or reader, who is not working as an app-based driver, as defined in Chapter 10.5 (commencing with Section 7448) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, during the time when the newspaper carrier is performing the newspaper delivery services.

(3) (A) On or before March 1, 2025, March 1, 2026, March 1, 2027, March 1, 2028, and March 1, 2029, every newspaper publisher or distributor that hires or directly contracts with newspaper carriers shall submit to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, in a manner prescribed by the agency and in conformity with existing law, the following information related to their workforce for the current year:

(i) The number of carriers for which the publisher or distributor paid payroll taxes in the previous year and the number of carriers for which the publisher or distributor did not pay payroll taxes in the previous year.

(ii) The average wage rate paid to carriers classified as independent contractors and as employees.

(iii) The number of carrier wage claims filed, if any, with the Labor Commissioner or in a court of law.

(B) For the March 1, 2025, reporting date only, every newspaper publisher and distributor shall also report the number of carrier wage claims filed with the Labor Commissioner or in a court of law for the preceding three years.

(C) Information that is submitted shall only be disclosed in accordance with Section 7927.705 of the Government Code, relating to trade secrets or other proprietary business information.

(4) This subdivision shall become inoperative on January 1, 2030, unless extended by the Legislature.

(i) An individual who is engaged by an international exchange visitor program that has obtained and maintains full official designation by the United States Department of State under Part 62 (commencing with Section 62.1) of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations for the purpose of conducting, instead of participating in, international and cultural exchange visitor programs and is in full compliance with Part 62 (commencing with Section 62.1) of Title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(j) A competition judge with a specialized skill set or expertise providing services that require the exercise of discretion and independent judgment to an organization for the purposes of determining the outcome or enforcing the rules of a competition. This includes, but is not limited to, an amateur umpire or referee.