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AB-800 Workplace Readiness Week: work permits. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 800

CHAPTER 271

An act to add Section 49110.5 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

[Approved by Governor September 30, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State September 30, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 800, Ortega. Workplace Readiness Week: work permits.

Existing law deems the month of May to be Labor History Month throughout the public schools, and encourages school districts to commemorate that month with appropriate educational exercises that make pupils aware of the role the labor movement has played in shaping California and the United States.

This bill would require the week of each year that includes April 28 to be known as "Workplace Readiness Week." The bill would require all public high schools, including charter schools, to annually observe that week by providing information to pupils on their rights as workers, and would specify the topics to be covered. The bill would require the observances to be integrated into the regular school program in grades 11 and 12, consistent with the history-social science framework. By imposing additional duties on public school officials, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to annually send a written notice to every public high school, including charter schools, with certain information relating to Workplace Readiness Week, as provided.

Existing law authorizes specific school administrators to issue a work permit to pupils subject to specific requirements, including requiring certain information to be included on the work permit.

This bill would require, beginning August 1, 2024, any minor seeking the signature of a verifying authority on a Statement of Intent to Employ a Minor and Request for a Work Permit-Certificate of Age to be issued, before or at the time of receiving the signature of the verifying authority, a document clearly explaining basic labor rights extended to workers, as provided. The bill would encourage the University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education to produce, with input from bona fide labor organizations, a draft template for the document to be provided to minors, including translations into languages other than English, as specified. The bill would require the document to express those labor rights in plain, natural terminology easily understood by the pupil. The bill would require the document, in English, to be in a physical form and include a Uniform Resource Locator for, and a quick response code linked to, an internet website with electronic versions of the document, including any translated versions of the document, produced by the University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education. To the extent these requirements would impose additional duties on public school officials, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

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

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature that California pupils enter the workforce with a strong understanding of their rights as workers, as well as their explicit rights as employed minors.

(b) It is further the intent of the Legislature to equip pupils with this knowledge to protect them from retaliation and discrimination, to ensure that these young workers receive all wages and benefits to which they are entitled, to empower them to refuse unsafe work when necessary, and to prepare them to assert their labor rights whenever these rights are threatened.

(c) It is further the intent of the Legislature that young Californians enter the workforce having received a thorough education on their right to join or organize a union at their workplace.

(d) It is further the intent of the Legislature that secondary schools present state-approved apprenticeship programs as a path towards a living wage career for any pupils.

SEC. 2. Section 49110.5 is added to the Education Code, to read:

49110.5. (a) The week of each year that includes April 28 shall be known as "Workplace Readiness Week." All public high schools, including charter schools, shall annually observe that week by providing information to pupils on their rights as workers. The topics covered shall include, but are not limited to, all the following:

(1) Local, state, and federal laws regarding each of the following issues:

(A) Prohibitions against misclassification of employees as independent contractors.

(B) Child labor.

(C) Wage and hour protections.

(D) Worker safety.

(E) Workers' compensation.

(F) Unemployment insurance.

(G) Paid Sick Leave, Paid Family Leave, State Disability Insurance, and the California Family Rights Act.

(H) The right to organize a union in the workplace.

(I) Prohibitions against retaliation by employers when workers exercise these or any other rights guaranteed by law.

(2) The labor movement's role in winning the protections and benefits described in subparagraphs (A) to (I), inclusive, of paragraph (1).

(3) An introduction to state-approved apprenticeship programs in California, how to access them, the variety of programs available, and how they can provide an alternative career path for those who do not attend college.

(b) For pupils in grades 11 and 12, the observances required by this section shall be integrated into the regular school program, consistent with the history-social science framework, but may also include special events after regular school hours. This integration is encouraged, but not required, to occur during Workplace Readiness Week.

(c) (1) Beginning August 1, 2024, any minor seeking the signature of a verifying authority on a Statement of Intent to Employ a Minor and Request for a Work Permit-Certificate of Age under this chapter shall be issued, before or at the time of receiving the signature of the verifying authority, a document clearly explaining basic labor rights extended to workers.

(2) Topics covered in this document shall include, but are not limited to, those identified in subparagraphs (A) to (I), inclusive, of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a).

(3) The University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education is encouraged to produce, with input from bona fide labor organizations, a draft template for the document to be provided to minors, including translations into other

languages, including, but not limited to, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean.

(4) The document shall express these labor rights in plain, natural terminology easily understood by the pupil.

(5) The document shall be in a physical form in English and shall include both a Uniform Resource Locator for, and a quick response code linked to, an internet website with electronic versions of the document, and any translated versions of the document, produced by the University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education pursuant to paragraph (3).

(d) The Superintendent shall annually send a written notice, detailing requirements of Workplace Readiness Week and how teachers may access related instructional materials and other resources, to every public high school, including charter schools, at least one month before Workplace Readiness Week.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.