Issues Update:
The final weeks of the 2019 legislative session in Connecticut are heating up, with a number of important bills being considered in the General Assembly. In particular, the legislature has been focusing on several labor issues that, while well-intentioned, will burden businesses in our state.

Most recently, HB 5004 An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage passed out of the House on Thursday morning after more than 14 hours of debate. With a final vote tally of 85 to 59 in the House, the bill will now move on to the Senate.

Lobbying efforts on our end from concerned associations and businesses have worked to reform the bill through the amendment process.

In its original form the bill called for a three-year incremental pay increase to $15, raised wages according to Consumer Price Index, and did not include a training wage.

The amended bill has lengthened the three-year increase to 4.5 years beginning in October 2019. The new raise schedule is as follows:

- $10.10 currently
- $11 by Oct. 1, 2019
- $12 by September 2020
- $13 by August 2021
- $14 by July 2022
- $15 by June 2023

Additionally, any future increases past 2023 will be tied to the Employment Cost Index rather than the Consumer Price Index. The ECI is a measure of wage growth calculated by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and was cited to be more stable than CPI.

Lastly, there is a training wage in place for workers under the age of 18 (with the exception of emancipated minors). This provision allows businesses to pay young help a wage 15 percent less than the minimum for up to 90 days/200 hours.

If passed, Connecticut would join several other states—like its neighbors New York and Massachusetts—that will eventually have a $15 minimum wage.

In addition to minimum wage, the CT General Assembly has been working on legislation to establish a paid family and medical leave program (SB 1, HB 5003), limit or altogether prohibit on-call shift scheduling (SB 764, HB 6924) and implement tolls statewide (SB 423, HB 7202 and HB 7280). Our efforts to slow these bills down persist in these final weeks of the session.

Questions?
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