

Vermont Legislative Update

MARCH 2019



The following report is from VRLDA Lobbyist, Bill Smith of Smith Government Relations, LLC.

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Did You Know?

The average yearly salary is \$47,473 in the lumber and building materials industry in Vt.

Issues Update:

Paid Family Leave, H. 107

The paid family leave bill is being reviewed by the House Appropriations Committee. Cost estimates to implement the proposed program range between \$2 and \$80 million.

As currently written, the paid family leave bill raises \$76.6 million in new payroll taxes set at .55% on employees, with employers having the option to contribute some or all of that amount. The bill would allow employers who already offer an equivalent or better paid leave benefit to opt out of the program. It also sets the wage reimbursement rate at 90 percent and allows for 12 weeks for maternity and bonding leave, and 8 weeks for family and personal care leave.

This bill is expected to be on the House floor the first week of April.

Minimum Wage, S. 23

The House General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee reviewed the Senate's minimum wage bill. Business groups are proposing a longer phase-in period and student wage exemptions, though the viability of these proposals is not yet known in the Legislature.

Workforce Development

The Board of Directors meeting with Labor Commissioner Lindsay Kurrle on March 12 was a productive one, and there seems to be movement on the issue in both the House and Senate.

The House of Representatives passed H.533, with the following components: addressing recruiting and relocation of workers; expanding training for weatherization coordinators; designating training funds to small businesses; studying adult career and technical education; and appropriating funding for worker recruitment marketing.

The Senate bill, S.162, proposes to: amend the remote worker incentive to have a cap of \$7,500 and defines qualifying expenses; would appropriate \$2 million for relocating workers and providing incentives and adds enhanced incentives to the Vermont Employment Growth Incentive program for start-ups, small businesses, mission-based companies and environmental technology companies.

Questions?

Please contact Kirk Ives, Director of Government Affairs at 518-880-6376 or kives@nrla.org.