

Assembly Bill No. 2509

CHAPTER 876

An act to amend Sections 98.1, 98.2, 203.1, 218.5, 226, 350, 351, and 1174 of, and to add Sections 218.6, and 226.7 to, the Labor Code, relating to employment.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2000. Filed
with Secretary of State September 29, 2000.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2509, Steinberg. Employment: remedies for employment law violations.

Existing law authorizes the Labor Commissioner to conduct administrative hearings and issue orders, decisions, and awards for recovery of wages, penalties, and other demands for compensation properly before the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement or the commissioner. Existing law requires these awards for unpaid wages to accrue interest at a specified adjusted annual rate determined under the tax laws.

This bill would instead require this rate to be the same as the legal rate of interest payable upon a contract obligation in default where the contract does not otherwise specify the rate of interest.

Existing law provides that any order, decision, or award made by the Labor Commissioner in these administrative proceedings may be appealed by filing an action in the municipal or superior court.

This bill would require employers filing such an appeal to post a prescribed undertaking and would provide for disposition thereof.

Under existing law, an employer in the building and construction industry is liable for a penalty of up to 30 days' wages and fringe benefits to any employee paid by a check, draft, or voucher that is drawn on a nonexistent account or that is dishonored for insufficient funds if the instrument is presented for payment within 30 days of receipt. This penalty does not apply if the employer can establish that the violation was unintentional.

This bill would make this penalty applicable to all employers, as specified, and would make related conforming and technical, nonsubstantive changes.

Under existing law, the prevailing party, with certain exceptions, is entitled to an award of attorney's fees in an action brought for nonpayment of wages, fringe benefits, or health and welfare or pension fund contributions.

This bill would add an express exception for employee actions to recover underpayment of the minimum wage or specified overtime wages, in which a prevailing employee but not the employer is

expressly authorized to recover attorney's fees. The bill would also require the court, in an action to recover unpaid wages, to award interest, as specified.

Under existing law, employers are required to provide employees semimonthly, with payment of wages, an itemized statement listing gross wages, total hours worked by employees paid by the hour, specified deductions, net wages, and certain other information. Violation of these requirements is a misdemeanor. Under existing law, an employee suffering injury as a result of the employer's knowing or intentional failure to comply with this requirement is entitled to recover the greater of actual damages or \$100, plus costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

This bill would provide that total hours need not be disclosed for salaried employees exempt from payment of overtime compensation. The bill would impose a state-mandated local program by requiring disclosure of the number of piece-rate units and the applicable piece rate for employees paid on that basis and by requiring disclosure of all applicable hourly rates and the number of hours worked by the employee at each rate. The bill would revise the liability of employers for knowing or intentional noncompliance with this disclosure requirement to entitle an aggrieved employee to recover the greater of actual damages or penal damages of \$50 for the initial pay period in which a violation occurs and \$100 per employee for each subsequent pay period in which the violation occurs up to \$4,000, plus costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

Existing law authorizes the Industrial Welfare Commission to adopt orders respecting wages, hours, and working conditions.

This bill would require any employer that requires any employee to work during a meal or rest period mandated by an order of the commission to pay the employee one hour's pay for each workday that the meal or rest period is not provided.

Existing law prohibits employers from receiving or deducting gratuities intended for employees from wages otherwise payable. Violation is a misdemeanor. Under existing law, this prohibition is not applicable to an employee that has a guaranteed wage or salary that is at least the higher of the federal or state minimum wage.

This bill would delete the above exemption, thereby imposing a state-mandated local program. As so revised, the bill would make these provisions applicable to amounts paid by patrons directly to a dancer subject to specified orders of the commission. The bill would also impose a state-mandated local program by requiring employers to remit to their employees gratuities paid by credit card, without deduction for credit card fees, not later than the next regular payday following the date the credit card payment is authorized by the patron.

Existing law requires employers to keep specified payroll records.



This bill would require these payroll records to identify the number of piece-rate units earned by employees and any applicable piece rate paid to employees.

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 no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 98.1 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

98.1. (a) Within 15 days after the hearing is concluded, the Labor Commissioner shall file in the office of the division a copy of the order, decision, or award. The order, decision, or award shall include a summary of the hearing and the reasons for the decision. Upon filing of the order, decision, or award, the Labor Commissioner shall serve a copy of the decision personally or by first-class mail on the parties. The notice shall also advise the parties of their right to appeal the decision or award and further advise the parties that failure to do so within the period prescribed by this chapter shall result in the decision or award becoming final and enforceable as a judgment by the appropriate municipal or superior court, in accordance with the appropriate rules of jurisdiction.

(b) For the purpose of this section, an award shall include any sums found owing, damages proved, and any penalties awarded pursuant to this code.

(c) All awards granted pursuant to a hearing under this chapter shall accrue interest on all due and unpaid wages at the same rate as prescribed by subdivision (b) of Section 3289 of the Civil Code. The interest shall accrue until the wages are paid from the date that the wages were due and payable as provided in Part 1 (commencing with Section 200) of Division 2.

SEC. 2. Section 98.2 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

98.2. (a) Within 10 days after service of notice of an order, decision, or award the parties may seek review by filing an appeal to the municipal or superior court, in accordance with the appropriate rules of jurisdiction, where the appeal shall be heard de novo. A copy of the appeal request shall be served upon the Labor Commissioner by the appellant. For purposes of computing the 10-day period after service, Section 1013 of the Code of Civil Procedure shall be applicable.

(b) Whenever an employer files an appeal pursuant to this section, the employer shall post an undertaking with the reviewing court in the amount of the order, decision, or award. The undertaking shall consist of an appeal bond issued by a licensed surety or a cash



deposit with the court in the amount of the order, decision, or award. The employer shall provide written notification to the other parties and the Labor Commissioner of the posting of the undertaking. The undertaking shall be on the condition that, if any judgment is entered in favor of the employee, the employer shall pay the amount owed pursuant to the judgment, and if the appeal is withdrawn or dismissed without entry of judgment, the employer shall pay the amount owed pursuant to the order, decision, or award of the Labor Commissioner unless the parties have executed a settlement agreement for payment of some other amount, in which case the employer shall pay the amount that the employer is obligated to pay under the terms of the settlement agreement. If the employer fails to pay the amount owed within 10 days of entry of the judgment, dismissal, or withdrawal of the appeal, or the execution of a settlement agreement, a portion of the undertaking equal to the amount owed, or the entire undertaking if the amount owed exceeds the undertaking, shall be forfeited to the employee.

(c) If the party seeking review by filing an appeal to the municipal or superior court is unsuccessful in the appeal, the court shall determine the costs and reasonable attorney's fees incurred by the other parties to the appeal, and assess that amount as a cost upon the party filing the appeal.

(d) If no notice of appeal of the order, decision, or award is filed within the period set forth in subdivision (a), the order, decision, or award shall, in the absence of fraud, be deemed the final order.

(e) The Labor Commissioner shall file, within 10 days of the order becoming final pursuant to subdivision (d), a certified copy of the final order with the clerk of the municipal or superior court, in accordance with the appropriate rules of jurisdiction, of the appropriate county unless a settlement has been reached by the parties and approved by the Labor Commissioner. Judgment shall be entered immediately by the court clerk in conformity therewith. The judgment so entered shall have the same force and effect as, and shall be subject to all of the provisions of law relating to, a judgment in a civil action, and may be enforced in the same manner as any other judgment of the court in which it is entered. Enforcement of the judgment shall receive court priority.

(f) In order to ensure that judgments are satisfied, the Labor Commissioner may serve upon the judgment debtor, personally or by first-class mail at the last known address of the judgment debtor listed with the division, a form similar to, and requiring the reporting of the same information as, the form approved or adopted by the Judicial Council for purposes of subdivision (a) of Section 116.830 of the Code of Civil Procedure to assist in identifying the nature and location of any assets of the judgment debtor.

The judgment debtor shall complete the form and cause it to be delivered to the division at the address listed on the form within 35



days after the form has been served on the judgment debtor, unless the judgment has been satisfied. In case of willful failure by the judgment debtor to comply with this subdivision, the division or the judgment creditor may request the court to apply the sanctions provided in Section 708.170 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

(g) Notwithstanding subdivision (e), the Labor Commissioner may stay execution of any judgment entered upon an order, decision, or award that has become final upon good cause appearing therefor and may impose the terms and conditions of the stay of execution. A certified copy of the stay of execution shall be filed with the clerk entering the judgment.

(h) When a judgment is satisfied in fact, otherwise than by execution, the Labor Commissioner may, upon the motion of either party or on its own motion, order entry of satisfaction of judgment. The clerk of the court shall enter a satisfaction of judgment upon the filing of a certified copy of the order.

(i) The Labor Commissioner shall make every reasonable effort to ensure that judgments are satisfied, including taking all appropriate legal action and requiring the employer to deposit a bond as provided in Section 240.

(j) The judgment creditor, or the Labor Commissioner as assignee of the judgment creditor, shall be entitled to court costs and reasonable attorney fees for enforcing the judgment that is rendered pursuant to this section.

SEC. 3. Section 203.1 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

203.1. If an employer pays an employee in the regular course of employment or in accordance with Section 201, 201.5, 201.7, or 202 any wages or fringe benefits, or both, by check, draft or voucher, which check, draft or voucher is subsequently refused payment because the employer or maker has no account with the bank, institution, or person on which the instrument is drawn, or has insufficient funds in the account upon which the instrument is drawn at the time of its presentation, so long as the same is presented within 30 days of receipt by the employee of the check, draft or voucher, those wages or fringe benefits, or both, shall continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefor is commenced. However, those wages and fringe benefits shall not continue for more than 30 days and this penalty shall not apply if the employer can establish to the satisfaction of the Labor Commissioner or an appropriate court of law that the violation of this section was unintentional. This penalty also shall not apply in any case in which an employee recovers the service charge authorized by Section 1719 of the Civil Code in an action brought by the employee thereunder.

SEC. 4. Section 218.5 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

218.5. In any action brought for the nonpayment of wages, fringe benefits, or health and welfare or pension fund contributions, the



court shall award reasonable attorney's fees and costs to the prevailing party if any party to the action requests attorney's fees and costs upon the initiation of the action. This section shall not apply to an action brought by the Labor Commissioner. This section shall not apply to a surety issuing a bond pursuant to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code or to an action to enforce a mechanics lien brought under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 3109) of Title 15 of Part 4 of Division 3 of the Civil Code.

This section does not apply to any action for which attorney's fees are recoverable under Section 1194.

SEC. 5. Section 218.6 is added to the Labor Code, to read:

218.6. In any action brought for the nonpayment of wages, the court shall award interest on all due and unpaid wages at the rate of interest specified in subdivision (b) of Section 3289 of the Civil Code, which shall accrue from the date that the wages were due and payable as provided in Part 1 (commencing with Section 200) of Division 2.

SEC. 6. Section 226 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

226. (a) Every employer shall, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, furnish each of his or her employees, either as a detachable part of the check, draft, or voucher paying the employee's wages, or separately when wages are paid by personal check or cash, an itemized statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, except for any employee whose compensation is solely based on a salary and who is exempt from payment of overtime under subdivision (a) of Section 515 or any applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission, (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 his or her social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is 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.

The deductions made from payments 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 or a 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.

An employer that is required by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant to this code to keep the information required by this section shall afford current and former employees the right to



inspect or copy the records pertaining to that current or former employee, upon reasonable request to the employer. The employer may take reasonable steps to assure 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.

This section does not apply to any employer of any 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.

(b) Any employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing and intentional failure by an employer to comply with subdivision (a) shall be 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 exceeding an aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and shall be entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

(c) This section does not apply to the state, or any city, county, city and county, district, or any other governmental entity.

SEC. 7. Section 226.7 is added to the Labor Code, to read:

226.7. (a) No employer shall require any employee to work during any meal or rest period mandated by an applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission.

(b) If an employer fails to provide an employee a meal period or rest period in accordance with an applicable order of the Industrial Welfare Commission, the employer shall pay the employee one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of compensation for each work day that the meal or rest period is not provided.

SEC. 8. Section 350 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

350. As used in this article, unless the context indicates otherwise:

(a) "Employer" means every person engaged in any business or enterprise in this state that has one or more persons in service under any appointment, contract of hire, or apprenticeship, express or implied, oral or written, irrespective of whether the person is the owner of the business or is operating on a concessionaire or other basis.

(b) "Employee" means every person, including aliens and minors, rendering actual service in any business for an employer, whether gratuitously or for wages or pay, whether the wages or pay are measured by the standard of time, piece, task, commission, or other method of calculation, and whether the service is rendered on a commission, concessionaire, or other basis.

(c) "Employing" includes hiring, or in any way contracting for, the services of an employee.



(d) “Agent” means every person other than the employer having the authority to hire or discharge any employee or supervise, direct, or control the acts of employees.

(e) “Gratuity” includes any tip, gratuity, money, or part thereof that has been paid or given to or left for an employee by a patron of a business over and above the actual amount due the business for services rendered or for goods, food, drink, or articles sold or served to the patron. Any amounts paid directly by a patron to a dancer employed by an employer subject to Industrial Welfare Commission Order No. 5 or 10 shall be deemed a gratuity.

(f) “Business” means any business establishment or enterprise, regardless of where conducted.

SEC. 9. Section 351 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

351. No employer or agent shall collect, take, or receive any gratuity or a part thereof that is paid, given to, or left for an employee by a patron, or deduct any amount from wages due an employee on account of a gratuity, or require an employee to credit the amount, or any part thereof, of a gratuity against and as a part of the wages due the employee from the employer. Every gratuity is hereby declared to be the sole property of the employee or employees to whom it was paid, given, or left for. An employer that permits patrons to pay gratuities by credit card shall pay the employees the full amount of the gratuity that the patron indicated on the credit card slip, without any deductions for any credit card payment processing fees or costs that may be charged to the employer by the credit card company. Payment of gratuities made by patrons using credit cards shall be made to the employees not later than the next regular payday following the date the patron authorized the credit card payment.

SEC. 10. Section 1174 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1174. Every person employing labor in this state shall:

(a) Furnish to the commission, at its request, reports or information that the commission requires to carry out this chapter. The reports and information shall be verified if required by the commission or any member thereof.

(b) Allow any member of the commission or the employees of the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement free access to the place of business or employment of the person to secure any information or make any investigation that they are authorized by this chapter to ascertain or make. The commission may inspect or make excerpts, relating to the employment of employees, from the books, reports, contracts, payrolls, documents, or papers of the person.

(c) Keep a record showing the names and addresses of all employees employed and the ages of all minors.

(d) Keep, at a central location in the state or at the plants or establishments at which employees are employed, payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-rate units earned by and any applicable piece rate



paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments. These records shall be kept in accordance with rules established for this purpose by the commission, but in any case shall be kept on file for not less than two years.

SEC. 11. The amendments to Section 218.5 of the Labor Code made by Section 4 of this act do not constitute a change in, but are declaratory of, the existing law, and these amendments are intended to reflect the holding of the Court of Appeal in *Early v. Superior Court* (2000) 79 Cal.App.4th 1420.

SEC. 12. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

