

LEGISLATIVE BILL 560

Approved by the Governor April 2, 2014

Introduced by Mello, 5.

FOR AN ACT relating to the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act; to amend sections 48-1228, 48-1230, and 48-1231, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to provide powers and duties for the Commissioner of Labor; to provide for enforcement of the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act; to change requirements for employers to provide wage statements as prescribed; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 48-1228, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

48-1228 Sections 48-1228 to 48-1232 and sections 2 and 3 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act.

Sec. 2. The Commissioner of Labor shall have the authority to subpoena records and witnesses related to the enforcement of the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act. The commissioner or his or her agent may inspect all related records and gather testimony on any matter relative to the enforcement of the act when the information sought is relevant to a lawful investigative purpose and is reasonable in scope.

Sec. 3. (1) The Commissioner of Labor shall issue a citation to an employer when an investigation reveals that the employer may have violated the Nebraska Wage Payment and Collection Act, other than a violation of subsection (2) of section 48-1230.

(2) When a citation is issued, the commissioner shall notify the employer of the proposed administrative penalty, if any, by certified mail or any other manner of delivery by which the United States Postal Service can verify delivery. The administrative penalty shall be not more than five hundred dollars in the case of a first violation and not more than five thousand dollars in the case of a second or subsequent violation.

(3) The employer has fifteen working days after the date of the citation or penalty to contest such citation or penalty. Notice of contest shall be sent to the commissioner who shall provide a hearing in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Sec. 4. Section 48-1230, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

48-1230 (1) Except as otherwise provided in this section, each employer shall pay all wages due its employees on regular days designated by the employer or agreed upon by the employer and employee. Thirty days' written notice shall be given to an employee before regular paydays are altered by an employer. An employer may deduct, withhold, or divert a portion of an employee's wages only when the employer is required to or may do so by state or federal law or by order of a court of competent jurisdiction or the employer has written agreement with the employee to deduct, withhold, or divert.

~~(2) Within ten working days after a written request is made by an employee, an employer shall furnish such employee with an itemized statement listing the wages earned and the deductions made from the employee's wages under subsection (1) of this section for each pay period that earnings and deductions were made. The statement may be in print or electronic format.~~

(2) On each regular payday, the employer shall deliver or make available to each employee, by mail or electronically, or shall provide at the employee's normal place of employment during employment hours for all shifts a wage statement showing, at a minimum, the identity of the employer, the hours for which the employee was paid, the wages earned by the employee, and deductions made for the employee. However, the employer need not provide information on hours worked for employees who are exempt from overtime under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, under 29 C.F.R. part 541, unless the employer has established a policy or practice of paying to or on behalf of exempt employees overtime, or bonus or a payment based on hours worked, whereupon the employer shall send or otherwise provide a statement to the exempt employees showing the hours the employee worked or the payments made to the employee by the employer, as applicable.

(3) Except as otherwise provided in section 48-1230.01:

(a) Whenever an employer, other than a political subdivision, separates an employee from the payroll, the unpaid wages shall become due

on the next regular payday or within two weeks of the date of termination, whichever is sooner; and

(b) Whenever a political subdivision separates an employee from the payroll, the unpaid wages shall become due within two weeks of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of the political subdivision if such employee is separated from the payroll at least one week prior to such meeting, or if an employee of a political subdivision is separated from the payroll less than one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of the political subdivision, the unpaid wages shall be due within two weeks of the following regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of the political subdivision.

Sec. 5. Section 48-1231, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

48-1231 (1) An employee having a claim for wages which are not paid within thirty days of the regular payday designated or agreed upon may institute suit for such unpaid wages in the proper court. If an employee establishes a claim and secures judgment on the claim, such employee shall be entitled to recover (a) the full amount of the judgment and all costs of such suit and (b) if such employee has employed an attorney in the case, an amount for attorney's fees assessed by the court, which fees shall not be less than twenty-five percent of the unpaid wages. If the cause is taken to an appellate court and the plaintiff recovers a judgment, the appellate court shall tax as costs in the action, to be paid to the plaintiff, an additional amount for attorney's fees in such appellate court, which fees shall not be less than twenty-five percent of the unpaid wages. If the employee fails to recover a judgment in excess of the amount that may have been tendered within thirty days of the regular payday by an employer, such employee shall not recover the attorney's fees provided by this section. If the court finds that no reasonable dispute existed as to the fact that wages were owed or as to the amount of such wages, the court may order the employee to pay the employer's attorney's fees and costs of the action as assessed by the court.

(2) An employer who fails to furnish an ~~itemized statement requested by an employee~~ wage statement under subsection (2) of section 48-1230 shall be guilty of an infraction as defined in section 29-431 and shall be subject to a fine pursuant to section 29-436.

Sec. 6. Original sections 48-1228, 48-1230, and 48-1231, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, are repealed.