

LEGISLATIVE BILL 1004

Approved by the Governor April 16, 2008

Introduced by Cornett, 45.

FOR AN ACT relating to revenue and taxation; to amend sections 77-2753 and 77-2790, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2007; to change an income tax withholding amount; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original sections; and to declare an emergency.

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

Section 1. Section 77-2753, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2007, is amended to read:

77-2753 (1)(a) Every employer and payor maintaining an office or transacting business within this state and making payment of any wages or other payments as defined in subsection (5) of this section which are taxable under the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 to any individual shall deduct and withhold from such wages for each payroll period and from such payments a tax computed in such manner as to result, so far as practicable, in withholding from the employee's wages and payments to the payee during each calendar year an amount substantially equivalent to the tax reasonably estimated to be due from the employee or payee under such act with respect to the amount of such wages and payments included in his or her taxable income during the calendar year. The method of determining the amount to be withheld shall be prescribed by rules and regulations of the Tax Commissioner. Such rules and regulations may allow withholding to be computed at a percentage of the federal withholding for gambling winnings or supplemental payments, including bonuses, commissions, overtime pay, and sales awards which are not paid at the same time as other wages. Any withholding tables prescribed by the Tax Commissioner shall be provided to the budget division of the Department of Administrative Services and the Legislative Fiscal Analyst for review at least sixty days before the tables become effective.

(b) Notwithstanding the amount of federal withholding or the rules and regulations of the Department of Revenue determining the amount of withholding, every employer and payor employing twenty-five or more employees shall withhold at least ~~three~~ one and one-half percent of the gross wages minus tax qualified deductions of each employee unless the employee provides satisfactory evidence that a lesser amount of withholding is justified in the employee's particular circumstances. Such satisfactory evidence may include birth certificates or social security information for dependents or other evidence that reasonably assures the employer that the employee is not improperly or fraudulently evading or defeating the income tax by reducing or eliminating withholding.

(2)(a) Every payor who is either (i) making a payment or payments in excess of five thousand dollars or (ii) maintaining an office or transacting business within this state and making a payment or payments related to such business in excess of six hundred dollars, and such payment or payments are for personal services performed or to be performed substantially within this state, to a nonresident individual, other than an employee, who is not subject to withholding on such payment under the Internal Revenue Code or a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company described in subdivision (c) of this subsection, shall be deemed an employer, and the individual performing the personal services shall be deemed an employee for the purposes of this section. The payor shall deduct and withhold from such payments the percentage of such payments prescribed in subdivision (b) of this subsection. If the individual performing the personal services provides the payor with a statement of the expenses reasonably related to the personal services, the total payment or payments may be reduced by the total expenses before computing the amount to deduct and withhold, except that such reduction shall not be more than fifty percent of such payment or payments.

(b) For any payment or payments for the same service, award, or purse that totals less than twenty-eight thousand dollars, the percentage deducted from such payment or payments pursuant to this subsection shall be four percent, and for all other payments, the percentage shall be six percent.

(c) For any corporation, partnership, or limited liability company that receives compensation for personal services in this state and of which all or substantially all of the shareholders, partners, or members are the individuals performing the personal services, including, but not limited to, individual athletes, entertainers, performers, or public speakers performing such personal services, such compensation shall be deemed wages of the individuals performing the personal services and subject to the income tax

imposed on individuals by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967.

(d) The withholding required by this subsection shall not apply to any payment to a nonresident alien, corporation, partnership, or limited liability company if such individual, shareholder, partner, or member provides the payor with a statement that the income earned is not subject to tax because of a treaty obligation of the United States.

(3) The Tax Commissioner may enter into agreements with the tax departments of other states, which require income tax to be withheld from the payment of wages, salaries, and such other payments, so as to govern the amounts to be withheld from the wages and salaries of and other payments to residents of such states. Such agreements may provide for recognition of anticipated tax credits in determining the amounts to be withheld and, under rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the Tax Commissioner, may relieve employers and payors in this state from withholding income tax on wages, salaries, and such other payments paid to nonresident employees and payees. The agreements authorized by this subsection shall be subject to the condition that the tax department of such other states grant similar treatment to residents of this state.

(4) The Tax Commissioner shall enter into an agreement with the United States Office of Personnel Management for the withholding of income tax imposed on individuals by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 on civil service annuity payments for those recipients who voluntarily request withholding. The agreement shall be pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 8345 and the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the Tax Commissioner.

(5) Wages and other payments subject to withholding shall mean payments that are subject to withholding under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and are (a) payments made by employers to employees, except such payments subject to 26 U.S.C. 3406, (b) payments of gambling winnings, or (c) pension or annuity payments when the recipient has requested the payor to withhold from such payments.

Sec. 2. Section 77-2790, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2007, is amended to read:

77-2790 (1)(a) If any part of a deficiency is the result of negligence or intentional disregard of rules and regulations but without intent to defraud, the Tax Commissioner may add to the tax an amount equal to five percent of the deficiency.

(b) If any part of a requested refund is overstated as a result of negligence, material misstatement, or intentional disregard of rules and regulations but without intent to defraud, the Tax Commissioner may add to the tax an amount equal to five percent of the overstatement of the refund.

(2)(a) If any part of a deficiency is the result of fraud, the Tax Commissioner may add to the tax an amount equal to fifty percent of the deficiency. This amount shall be in lieu of any amount determined under subsection (1) of this section.

(b) If any part of a requested refund is overstated as a result of fraud, the Tax Commissioner may add to the tax an amount equal to fifty percent of the overstatement of the refund. This amount shall be in lieu of any amount determined under subsection (1) of this section.

(3) If any taxpayer fails to pay all or any part of an installment of any tax due, he or she shall be deemed to have made an underpayment of estimated tax. The Tax Commissioner shall determine the amount of underpayment of estimated tax in accordance with the laws of the United States.

(4) If any taxpayer, with intent to evade or defeat any income tax imposed by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 or the payment thereof, claims an excessive number of exemptions or in any other manner overstates the amount of withholding, he or she shall be guilty of a Class II misdemeanor. If any employer or payor, without intent to evade or defeat any income tax imposed by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 or the payment thereof, fails to make a return and pay a tax withheld by him or her at the time required by or under the act, such employer or payor shall be liable for such taxes and shall pay the same together with interest thereon and any addition to tax assessed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. Such interest and addition to tax shall not be charged to or collected from the employee or payee by the employer or payor. The Tax Commissioner shall have the same rights and powers for the collection of such tax, interest, and addition to tax against such employer or payor as are now prescribed by the act for the collection of income tax against a taxpayer.

(5) If any person required to collect, withhold, truthfully account for, and pay over the income tax imposed by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 willfully fails to collect or withhold such tax or truthfully account for and pay over such tax or willfully attempts in any manner to evade or defeat the tax or the payment thereof, the Tax Commissioner may, in addition to other

penalties provided by law, impose, assess, and collect a penalty equal to the total amount of the tax evaded, not collected, not withheld, or not accounted for and paid over. No addition to tax under subsection (1) or (2) of this section shall be imposed for any offense to which this subsection applies.

(6) If any person with fraudulent intent fails to pay, or to deduct or withhold and pay, any income tax, to make, render, sign, or certify any return of estimated tax, or to supply any information within the time required, the Tax Commissioner may impose, assess, and collect a penalty of not more than one thousand dollars, in addition to any other amounts required under the income tax provisions of the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967.

(7) If any person for frivolous or groundless reasons or with the intent to delay or impede the administration of the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 (a) fails to pay over any tax due and owing under such act, (b) fails to file any return required under such act, or (c) files what purports to be a return but which does not contain sufficient information from which to determine the correctness of the self-assessment of tax or which contains information that indicates that the self-assessment of tax is substantially incorrect, such person shall pay a penalty of five hundred dollars for each occurrence. The penalty provided by this subsection shall be in addition to any other penalties provided by law.

(8) Any person who aids, procures, advises, or assists in the preparation of any return, affidavit, refund claim, or other document with the knowledge that its use will result in the material understatement of the tax liability of another person or the material overstatement of the amount of a refund of another person shall, in addition to other penalties provided by law, pay a penalty of one thousand dollars with respect to each separate return or other document.

(a) For the purposes of this subsection, a person furnishing typing, reproducing, or other mechanical assistance shall not be treated as having aided or assisted in the preparation of such document.

(b) A determination of a material deficiency shall not be sufficient to show that a person has aided or assisted in a material understatement of the tax liability of another person.

(c) The penalty in this subsection shall not be imposed more than once on any person for having aided or assisted in the preparation of documents for the same taxpayer, the same tax, and the same tax period regardless of the number of documents involved.

(d) Such penalty shall apply whether or not the understatement is with the consent of the person authorized to present the return, affidavit, refund claim, or other document.

(9) The additions to the income tax and penalties relating thereto provided by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 shall be paid upon notice and demand and shall be assessed, collected, and paid in the same manner as taxes, and any reference in such act to income tax or the tax imposed by the act shall be deemed also to refer to additions to the tax and penalties provided by this section. For purposes of the deficiency procedures provided in section 77-2776, this subsection shall not apply to:

(a) Any addition to tax under subsection (1) of section 77-2789 except as to that portion attributable to a deficiency;

(b) Any addition to tax for underpayment of estimated tax as provided in subsection (3) of this section; or

(c) Any additional penalty under subsection (6), (7), or (8) of this section.

(10) For purposes of subsections (1) and (2) of this section relating to deficiencies resulting from negligence or fraud, the amount shown as the tax by the taxpayer upon his or her return shall be taken into account in determining the amount of the deficiency only if such return was filed on or before the last day prescribed for the filing of such return determined with regard to any extension of time for such filing.

(11) For purposes of subsections (5) and (6) of this section, the term person shall include an individual, corporation, partnership, or limited liability company, or an officer or employee of any corporation, including a dissolved corporation, or a member or employee of any partnership or limited liability company, who as such officer, employee, or member is under a duty to perform the act in respect of which the violation occurs.

(12) If any person fails to comply with the reporting or filing requirements of sections 77-2772, 77-2775, and 77-2786 or the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated thereunder, the Tax Commissioner may impose, assess, and collect a penalty against such person for each instance of noncompliance of twenty-five percent of the tax due. Such amount shall be in addition to any other penalty, tax, or interest otherwise imposed by law for such noncompliance.

(13) If any nonresident individual provides false information or statements to an employer or payor regarding the portion of his or her wages or payments that are subject to withholding for this state which if used would result in the amount withheld being less than seventy-five percent of his or her income tax liability on such wages or payments or if any employer or payor uses such information when the employer or payor knows such information is false or maintains records which show such information is false, the Tax Commissioner may, in addition to other penalties provided by law, impose, assess, and collect from such individual, payor, or employer the penalties provided in subsections (5) and (6) of this section.

(14) If any employer or payor employing twenty-five or more employees who is required to withhold and pay over income tax imposed by the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967 fails to either (a) withhold at least ~~three~~ one and one-half percent of the wages of any employee or (b) obtain satisfactory evidence from the employee justifying a lower withholding amount as required by subdivision (1)(b) of section 77-2753, the Tax Commissioner may impose, assess, and collect a penalty of not more than one thousand dollars per violation.

Sec. 3. Original sections 77-2753 and 77-2790, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2007, are repealed.

Sec. 4. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when passed and approved according to law.