

## Assembly Bill No. 276

### CHAPTER 329

An act to amend Sections 210, 225.5, 226, 605, 752, 1021, 1021.5, and 1197.1 of the Labor Code, relating to employment.

[Approved by Governor September 6, 2003. Filed with Secretary of State September 8, 2003.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 276, Koretz. Penalties for Labor Code violations.

Under existing law, if an employer fails to pay wages or unlawfully withholds wages, the penalty for a first violation is \$50, and the penalty for subsequent or willful or intentional violations is \$100 and the penalty recovered is placed in the General Fund.

This bill would increase the penalties to \$100 for the first violation and \$200 for subsequent or willful or intentional violations. This bill would provide that 12.5% of the penalty would be placed in a fund within the Labor and Workforce Development Agency to educate employers about state labor laws, and the remainder would be placed in the General Fund.

Under existing law, a railroad corporation that violates laws regulating employee work hours is subject to a penalty of not more than \$200.

This bill would increase the maximum penalty to \$500.

Under existing law, the penalty for violating the laws regulating work hours of employees in underground mines, smelters, or plants for the reduction or refining of ores or metals is \$50 for the first intentional violation, and \$100 for every subsequent violation.

This bill would increase the penalty to \$100 for the first intentional violation and \$200 for each subsequent violation.

Under existing law, the penalty for any person who does not hold a state contractor's license employing workers to perform services for which a license is required and for any person with a state contractor's license who knowingly enters into a contract with a person to perform services for which a contract is required and that person does not meet the status of independent contractor or does not hold a state license is \$100.

This bill would increase the penalty to \$200.

Under existing law, any employer who pays less than the minimum wage is subject to a civil penalty of \$50 for each underpaid employee for each pay period.

This bill would increase the penalty to \$100.



The bill would also make other technical, nonsubstantive changes to existing law.

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

SECTION 1. Section 210 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

210. In addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in this article, every person who fails to pay the wages of each employee as provided in Sections 204, 204b, 204.1, 204.2, 205, 205.5, and 1197.5, shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows:

(a) For any initial violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each failure to pay each employee.

(b) For each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars (\$200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld.

The penalty shall be recovered by the Labor Commissioner as part of a hearing held to recover unpaid wages and penalties pursuant to this chapter or in an independent civil action. The action shall be brought in the name of the people of the State of California and the Labor Commissioner and the attorneys thereof may proceed and act for and on behalf of the people in bringing these actions. Twelve and one-half percent of the penalty recovered shall be paid into a fund within the Labor and Workforce Development Agency dedicated to educating employers about state labor laws, and the remainder shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the General Fund.

SEC. 2. Section 225.5 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

225.5. In addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in this article, every person who unlawfully withholds wages due any employee in violation of Section 212, 216, 221, 222, or 223 shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows:

(a) For any initial violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each failure to pay each employee.

(b) For each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars (\$200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld.

The penalty shall be recovered by the Labor Commissioner as part of a hearing held to recover unpaid wages and penalties or in an independent civil action. The action shall be brought in the name of the people of the State of California and the Labor Commissioner and attorneys thereof may proceed and act for and on behalf of the people in bringing the action. Twelve and one-half percent of the penalty recovered shall be paid into a fund within the Labor and Workforce



Development Agency dedicated to educating employers about state labor laws, and the remainder shall be paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the General Fund.

SEC. 3. 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 accurate 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.

(b) An employer that is required by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant to this code to keep the information required by subdivision (a) 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.

(c) An employer who receives a written or oral request to inspect or copy records pursuant to subdivision (b) pertaining to a current or former employee shall comply with the request as soon as practicable, but no later than 21 calendar days from the date of the request. A violation of this subdivision is an infraction. Impossibility of performance, not caused by or a result of a violation of law, shall be an affirmative defense for an employer in any action alleging a violation of this subdivision. An



employer may designate the person to whom a request under this subdivision will be made.

(d) 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.

(e) An employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing and intentional failure by an employer to comply with subdivision (a) is 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 is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

(f) A failure by an employer to permit a current or former employee to inspect or copy records within the time set forth in subdivision (c) entitles the current or former employee or the Labor Commissioner to recover a seven hundred fifty dollar (\$750) penalty from the employer.

(g) An employee may also bring an action for injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, and is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

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

SEC. 4. Section 605 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

605. Any railroad corporation that violates any of the provisions of this chapter is liable to the state in a penalty of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) nor more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for each offense. The penalty shall be recovered and suit therefor shall be brought in the name of the state in a court of competent jurisdiction in any county into or through which said railroad may pass. The suit may be brought either by the Attorney General of the state or under his or her direction by the district attorney of any county in the state into or through which said railroad passes.

SEC. 5. Section 752 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

752. (a) Any affected employee, or his or her representative, may file a complaint with the Labor Commissioner concerning the conduct of an election pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 750.5 within 14 days following notice of the outcome of the election. The Labor Commissioner shall investigate the complaint and shall invalidate the election if the commissioner finds that misconduct has occurred that could have affected the outcome of the election. If the election is



invalidated, the commissioner shall prohibit the employer from conducting a similar election for a period of 12 months.

(b) Any employer, or representative of an employer, that violates Section 750 or 751.8 shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows:

(1) For any initial violation that is intentionally committed, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each affected employee for each violation for each pay period.

(2) For each subsequent violation for the same offense, two hundred dollars (\$200) for each violation for each affected employee for each pay period, regardless of whether the initial violation is intentionally committed.

(c) If the Labor Commissioner determines that an employer has failed to comply with paragraph (6) of subdivision (b) of Section 750.5, the Labor Commissioner shall order the employer to comply. The order, in appropriate cases, shall include provisions for reinstatement and backpay.

(d) An employer shall not retaliate in any way against an employee for exercising any right pursuant to this chapter.

SEC. 6. Section 1021 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1021. Any person who does not hold a valid state contractor's license issued pursuant to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and who employs any worker to perform services for which a license is required, shall be subject to a civil penalty in the amount of two hundred dollars (\$200) per employee for each day of employment. The civil penalties provided for by this section are in addition to any other penalty provided by law.

SEC. 7. Section 1021.5 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1021.5. Any person who holds a valid state contractor's license issued pursuant to Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and who willingly and knowingly enters into a contract with any person to perform services for which a license is required as an independent contractor, and that person does not meet the burden of proof of independent contractor status pursuant to Section 2750.5 or hold a valid state contractor's license, shall be subject to a civil penalty in the amount of two hundred dollars (\$200) per person so contracted with for each day of the contract. The civil penalties provided for by this section are in addition to any other penalty provided by law.

SEC. 8. Section 1197.1 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1197.1. (a) Any employer or other person acting either individually or as an officer, agent, or employee of another person, who pays or causes to be paid to any employee a wage less than the minimum fixed by an order of the commission shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows:



(1) For any initial violation that is intentionally committed, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee is underpaid.

(2) For each subsequent violation for the same specific offense, two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee is underpaid regardless of whether the initial violation is intentionally committed.

(b) If, upon inspection or investigation, the Labor Commissioner determines that a person has paid or caused to be paid a wage less than the minimum, the Labor Commissioner may issue a citation to the person in violation. The citation may be served personally or by registered mail in accordance with subdivision (c) of Section 11505 of the Government Code. Each citation shall be in writing and shall describe the nature of the violation, including reference to the statutory provision alleged to have been violated. The Labor Commissioner promptly shall take all appropriate action, in accordance with this section, to enforce the citation and to recover the civil penalty assessed in connection with the citation.

(c) If a person desires to contest a citation or the proposed assessment of a civil penalty therefor, the person shall, within 15 business days after service of the citation, notify the office of the Labor Commissioner that appears on the citation of his or her request for an informal hearing. The Labor Commissioner or his or her deputy or agent shall, within 30 days, hold a hearing at the conclusion of which the citation or proposed assessment of a civil penalty shall be affirmed, modified, or dismissed.

The decision of the Labor Commissioner shall consist of a notice of findings, findings, and an order, all of which shall be served on all parties to the hearing within 15 days after the hearing by regular first-class mail at the last known address of the party on file with the Labor Commissioner. Service shall be completed pursuant to Section 1013 of the Code of Civil Procedure. Any amount found due by the Labor Commissioner as a result of a hearing shall become due and payable 45 days after notice of the findings and written findings and order have been mailed to the party assessed. A writ of mandate may be taken from this finding to the appropriate superior court. The party shall pay any judgment and costs ultimately rendered by the court against the party for the assessment. The writ shall be taken within 45 days of service of the notice of findings, findings, and order thereon.

(d) A person to whom a citation has been issued shall, in lieu of contesting a citation pursuant to this section, transmit to the office of the Labor Commissioner designated on the citation the amount specified for the violation within 15 business days after issuance of the citation.



(e) When no petition objecting to a citation or the proposed assessment of a civil penalty is filed, a certified copy of the citation or proposed civil penalty may be filed by the Labor Commissioner in the office of the clerk of the superior court in any county in which the person assessed has or had a place of business. The clerk, immediately upon the filing, shall enter judgment for the state against the person assessed in the amount shown on the citation or proposed assessment of a civil penalty.

(f) When findings and the order thereon are made affirming or modifying a citation or proposed assessment of a civil penalty after hearing, a certified copy of these findings and the order entered thereon may be entered by the Labor Commissioner in the office of the clerk of the superior court in any county in which the person assessed has property or in which the person assessed has or had a place of business. The clerk, immediately upon the filing, shall enter judgment for the state against the person assessed in the amount shown on the certified order.

(g) A judgment entered pursuant to this section shall bear the same rate of interest and shall have the same effect as other judgments and be given the same preference allowed by the law on other judgments rendered for claims for taxes. The clerk shall make no charge for the service provided by this section to be performed by him or her.

(h) The civil penalties provided for in this section are in addition to any other penalty provided by law.

(i) This section shall not apply to any order of the commission relating to household occupations.

