AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JANUARY 4, 2010

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009–10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 516

Introduced by Assembly Member Niello

February 24, 2009

An act to amend Section 4453 of the Labor Code, relating to workers' compensation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 516, as amended, Niello. Workers' compensation: temporary ~~disability.~~ *disability: local inmates.*

Existing workers' compensation law generally requires employers to secure the payment of workers' compensation, including medical treatment, for injuries incurred by their employees that arise out of, ~~or~~ *and* in the course of, employment. Existing law provides certain methods for determining workers' compensation benefits payable to a worker or his or her dependents for purposes of temporary disability, permanent total disability, permanent partial disability, and in case of death. Existing law requires, in computing average annual earnings for the purposes of temporary disability indemnity and permanent total disability indemnity only, that the average weekly earnings be taken, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2006, at not less than $189, nor more than $1,260 or 1.5 times the state average weekly wage, whichever is greater, and, commencing January 1, 2007, and each January thereafter, requires that those limits be increased by an amount equal to the percentage increase in the state average weekly wage as compared to the prior year.

Existing law provides that whenever a person confined in the county jail, industrial farm, road camp, or city jail suffers injuries or death *while working in the prevention or suppression of forest, brush, or grass fires, he or she shall be considered to be an employee of the county or city, respectively, for purposes of workers' compensation.*

Existing law provides that persons performing certain duties under a county work release program shall be eligible for workers' compensation.

This bill would require, for injuries *to an inmate of any county jail or an inmate assigned to a county work release program* occurring on or after January 1, 2010, for temporary disability, that the benefit amounts payable to an injured worker be not less than an amount equal to the employee's weekly earnings from all employers, nor more than $1,260, or 1.5 times the state average wage, whichever is greater.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

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

SECTION 1. Section 4453 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

4453. (a) In computing average annual earnings for the purposes of temporary disability indemnity and permanent total disability indemnity only, the average weekly earnings shall be taken at:

(1) Not less than one hundred twenty-six dollars ($126) nor more than two hundred ninety-four dollars ($294), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1983.

(2) Not less than one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) nor more than three hundred thirty-six dollars ($336), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1984.

(3) Not less than one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) for permanent total disability, and, for temporary disability, not less than the lesser of one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) or 1.5 times the employee's average weekly earnings from all employers, but in no event less than one hundred forty-seven dollars ($147), nor more than three hundred ninety-nine dollars ($399), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1990.

(4) Not less than one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) for permanent total disability, and for temporary disability, not less than the lesser of one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189) or 1.5 times the employee's average weekly earnings from all employers,

nor more than five hundred four dollars ($504), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1991.

(5) Not less than one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) for permanent total disability, and for temporary disability, not less than the lesser of one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189) or 1.5 times the employee's average weekly earnings from all employers, nor more than six hundred nine dollars ($609), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1994.

(6) Not less than one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) for permanent total disability, and for temporary disability, not less than the lesser of one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189) or 1.5 times the employee's average weekly earnings from all employers, nor more than six hundred seventy-two dollars ($672), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1995.

(7) Not less than one hundred sixty-eight dollars ($168) for permanent total disability, and for temporary disability, not less than the lesser of one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189) or 1.5 times the employee's average weekly earnings from all employers, nor more than seven hundred thirty-five dollars ($735), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1996.

(8) Not less than one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189), nor more than nine hundred three dollars ($903), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2003.

(9) Not less than one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189), nor more than one thousand ninety-two dollars ($1,092), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2004.

(10) Not less than one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189), nor more than one thousand two hundred sixty dollars ($1,260), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2005. For injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2006, average weekly earnings shall be taken at not less than one hundred eighty-nine dollars ($189), nor more than one thousand two hundred sixty dollars ($1,260) or 1.5 times the state average weekly wage, whichever is greater. Commencing on January 1, 2007, and each January 1 thereafter, the limits specified in this paragraph shall be increased by an amount equal to the percentage increase in the state average weekly wage as compared to the prior year. For purposes of this paragraph, "state average weekly wage" means the average weekly wage paid by employers to employees covered by unemployment insurance as reported by the United States Department of Labor

for California for the 12 months ending March 31 of the calendar year preceding the year in which the injury occurred.

(11) For injuries *to an inmate of any county jail or an inmate assigned to a work release program under Section 4024.2 of the Penal Code* occurring on or after January 1, 2010, for temporary disability, not less than an amount equal to the employee's average weekly earnings from all employers, nor more than one thousand two hundred sixty dollars ($1,260) or 1.5 times the state average weekly wage, whichever is greater. Commencing on January 1, 2010, *and each January 1 thereafter,* the maximum limit specified in this paragraph shall be increased by an amount equal to the percentage increase in the state average weekly wage as compared to the prior year. For purposes of this paragraph, "state average weekly wage" means the average weekly wage paid by employers to employees covered by unemployment insurance as reported by the United States Department of Labor for California for the 12 months ending March 31 of the calendar year preceding the year in which the injury occurred.

(b) In computing average annual earnings for purposes of permanent partial disability indemnity, except as provided in Section 4659, the average weekly earnings shall be taken at:

(1) Not less than seventy-five dollars ($75), nor more than one hundred ninety-five dollars ($195), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1983.

(2) Not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred ten dollars ($210), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1984.

(3) When the final adjusted permanent disability rating of the injured employee is 15 percent or greater, but not more than 24.75 percent: (A) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred twenty-two dollars ($222), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1994; (B) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred thirty-one dollars ($231), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1995; (C) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred forty dollars ($240), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1996.

(4) When the final adjusted permanent disability rating of the injured employee is 25 percent or greater, not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred twenty-two dollars ($222), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 1991.

(5) When the final adjusted permanent disability rating of the injured employee is 25 percent or greater but not more than 69.75 percent: (A) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred thirty-seven dollars ($237), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1994; (B) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred forty-six dollars ($246), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1995; and (C) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred fifty-five dollars ($255), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1996.

(6) When the final adjusted permanent disability rating of the injured employee is less than 70 percent: (A) not less than one hundred fifty dollars ($150), nor more than two hundred seventy-seven dollars and fifty cents ($277.50), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2003; (B) not less than one hundred fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents ($157.50), nor more than three hundred dollars ($300), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2004; (C) not less than one hundred fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents ($157.50), nor more than three hundred thirty dollars ($330), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2005; and (D) not less than one hundred ninety-five dollars ($195), nor more than three hundred forty-five dollars ($345), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2006.

(7) When the final adjusted permanent disability rating of the injured employee is 70 percent or greater, but less than 100 percent: (A) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred fifty-two dollars ($252), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1994; (B) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than two hundred ninety-seven dollars ($297), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1995; (C) not less than one hundred five dollars ($105), nor more than three hundred forty-five dollars ($345), for injuries occurring on or after July 1, 1996; (D) not less than one hundred fifty dollars ($150), nor more than three hundred forty-five dollars ($345), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2003; (E) not less than one hundred fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents ($157.50), nor more than three hundred seventy-five dollars ($375), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2004; (F) not less than one hundred fifty-seven dollars and fifty cents ($157.50), nor more than four hundred five dollars ($405), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2005; and (G) not less than one

hundred ninety-five dollars ($195), nor more than four hundred five dollars ($405), for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2006.

(c) Between the limits specified in subdivisions (a) and (b), the average weekly earnings, except as provided in Sections 4456 to 4459, shall be arrived at as follows:

(1) Where the employment is for 30 or more hours a week and for five or more working days a week, the average weekly earnings shall be the number of working days a week times the daily earnings at the time of the injury.

(2) Where the employee is working for two or more employers at or about the time of the injury, the average weekly earnings shall be taken as the aggregate of these earnings from all employments computed in terms of one week; but the earnings from employments other than the employment in which the injury occurred shall not be taken at a higher rate than the hourly rate paid at the time of the injury.

(3) If the earnings are at an irregular rate, such as piecework, or on a commission basis, or are specified to be by week, month, or other period, then the average weekly earnings mentioned in subdivision (a) shall be taken as the actual weekly earnings averaged for this period of time, not exceeding one year, as may conveniently be taken to determine an average weekly rate of pay.

(4) Where the employment is for less than 30 hours per week, or where for any reason the foregoing methods of arriving at the average weekly earnings cannot reasonably and fairly be applied, the average weekly earnings shall be taken at 100 percent of the sum that reasonably represents the average weekly earning capacity of the injured employee at the time of his or her injury, due consideration being given to his or her actual earnings from all sources and employments.

(d) Every computation made pursuant to this section beginning January 1, 1990, shall be made only with reference to temporary disability or the permanent disability resulting from an original injury sustained after January 1, 1990. However, all rights existing under this section on January 1, 1990, shall be continued in force. Except as provided in Section 4661.5, disability indemnity benefits shall be calculated according to the limits in this section in effect on the date of injury and shall remain in effect for the duration of any disability resulting from the injury.

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