

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 920

Introduced by Assembly Member Portantino

February 18, 2011

An act to amend Section 19635 of, and to add Chapter 10.4 (commencing with Section 3524.1) to Division 4 of Title 1 of, the Government Code, relating to public employees.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 920, as introduced, Portantino. Public employees: rights.

The existing Bill of Rights for State Excluded Employees prescribes various rights and terms and conditions of employment for excluded employees, defined as certain supervisory, managerial, and confidential state employees.

This bill would enact the Public Employees' Bill of Rights Act that would apply to state employees other than excluded employees. The stated purpose of this act would be to inform public employees of their rights and terms of employment in order to promote harmonious personnel relations between public employees and their employers. This bill would, among other things, provide that state employees shall be entitled to priority over excluded employees or contractors in filling permanent, overtime, and on-call positions. This bill would also authorize the formation of peer review committees for professional staff to provide input regarding workplace operations.

Existing law requires notice of any adverse action against any state employee for any cause for discipline based on any civil service law to be served within 3 years after the cause for discipline, upon which the notice is based, first arose. Existing law provides that an adverse action based on fraud, embezzlement, or the falsification of records is valid if

notice of the adverse action is served within 3 years after the discovery of the fraud, embezzlement, or falsification.

This bill would require notice of the adverse action to be served and the investigation to be completed within one year after the cause for discipline first arose in order for an adverse action to be valid against any state employee for any cause for discipline based on any civil service law of this state.

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

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 10.4 (commencing with Section 3524.1)
2 is added to Division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code, to read:

3
4 CHAPTER 10.4. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

5
6 3524.1. This chapter shall be known as the Public Employees'
7 Bill of Rights Act.

8 3524.2. The Legislature hereby finds and declares that the
9 rights and protections provided to public employees under this
10 chapter constitute a matter of important concern. The Legislature
11 further finds and declares that the efficient and effective
12 administration of public programs depends upon the maintenance
13 of high morale and the objective consideration of issues between
14 public employees and their employer.

15 3524.3. The purpose of this chapter is to inform public
16 employees of their rights and terms of employment, and to inspire
17 dedicated service and promote harmonious personnel relations
18 between public employees and their employer.

19 3524.4. For purposes of this chapter:

20 (a) "Contractor" means any person, other than a civil service
21 employee, who contracts to perform services for a state agency.

22 (b) "Employee" means a civil service employee, other than an
23 excluded employee, of the State of California.

24 (c) "Employer" includes all state agencies, boards, and
25 commissions as may be designated by law that employ civil service
26 employees, with the exception of the University of California.

27 (d) "Excluded employee" means any of those employees
28 described in subdivision (b) of Section 3527.

1 (e) "Professional employee" means an employee described in
2 Section 3521.5.

3 3524.5. (a) The employer shall provide to each employee at
4 the onset of his or her employment and at reasonable intervals, a
5 current, detailed, and accurate job description, including a complete
6 description of the scope of his or her duties, salary, and benefits
7 information.

8 (b) The work of the employee shall not be standardized in
9 relation to a given period of time, nor shall unreasonable quotas
10 be imposed on an employee.

11 (c) The employer shall not unreasonably prevent the employee
12 from using his or her daily rest and lunch periods as well as his or
13 her annual, vacation, sick, or other earned leaves. An employee
14 shall be paid a salary proportionate to the time base he or she is
15 scheduled to work.

16 (d) An employee may not be compelled to perform extra work,
17 including work caused by vacancies, furloughs, or layoffs, without
18 fair compensation.

19 (e) An employee shall enjoy priority in filling permanent,
20 overtime, and on-call positions over excluded employees and
21 contractors.

22 3524.6. Each employee shall have the right to a safe and healthy
23 working environment. Grievances relating to this right shall be
24 given a priority status.

25 3524.7. (a) Neither the employer, nor any of its excluded
26 employees or contractors, shall unlawfully discriminate against
27 an employee on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, creed, color,
28 national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical handicap, or
29 sexual orientation.

30 (b) There shall be no reprisals for any employee actions
31 involving exercise of rights under this section, in addition to the
32 protections afforded in the Ralph C. Dills Act (Chapter 10.3
33 (commencing with Section 3512)) and the California
34 Whistleblower Protection Act (Chapter 6.5 (commencing with
35 Section 8547) of Division 1 of Title 2). Employees shall be
36 provided with a confidential hotline to report waste, abuse of
37 authority, and violation of law or threat to public safety.

38 (c) An employee shall have the right to sue the employer for
39 damages for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the
40 federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the federal Family

1 and Medical Leave Act, the California Family Rights Act, and the
2 federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

3 3524.8. (a) An employee is entitled to be fairly and
4 progressively disciplined for any deficient or inappropriate
5 behavior or job performance. The employer shall ensure that
6 preventive and corrective actions are taken before any adverse
7 action is administered in accordance with the current “Guide to
8 Employee Conduct and Discipline,” or any successor publication,
9 distributed by the Department of Personnel Administration.

10 (b) Employers shall adhere to strict due process and periodic
11 written notice procedures while investigating employees. Those
12 investigations shall not ordinarily exceed the timeframe contained
13 in the original notice.

14 3524.9. The employer shall honor the Memorandum of
15 Understanding (MOU) under which each employee is covered.
16 The employee is entitled to receive timely responses from the
17 employer in all areas covered by the MOU, especially in response
18 to complaints and grievances. Any grievance filed by an employee
19 shall be considered to have been resolved in favor of the employee
20 if any of the contractual timelines are violated by the employer.

21 3524.10. (a) This section shall apply to an employee who is
22 required to maintain a professional license to perform his or her
23 work.

24 (b) An employee’s professional judgment related to his or her
25 work and work product shall not be interfered with nor infringed
26 upon by nonprofessional or unlicensed employees or supervisors.
27 An employee shall not be required to perform work that could put
28 his or her professional license in jeopardy.

29 (c) Performance and merit evaluations shall include significant
30 input from a management or supervisory peer who has the same
31 or a higher professional status or license, as applicable, as that held
32 by the employee.

33 (d) If there are no professional staff employed by the employer,
34 a peer review committee shall be formed and authorized to have
35 regular input regarding the operation of the workplace.

36 (e) Professional staff and the respective bylaws of the
37 professional staff shall be recognized by the employer. Professional
38 staff shall have regular input regarding the operation of the
39 workplace.

1 (f) Professional employees named in lawsuits as codefendants
2 along with the employer and the state shall have the right to
3 representation. These employees shall enjoy all the same rights
4 afforded to all legal clients, including the right to be informed of
5 a settlement by the state. If there is a conflict of interest between
6 the employee and the state as codefendants, the state shall provide
7 independent counsel for the employee.

8 SEC. 2. Section 19635 of the Government Code is amended
9 to read:

10 19635. No adverse action shall be valid against any state
11 employee for any cause for discipline based on any civil service
12 law of this state, unless notice of the adverse action is served ~~within~~
13 ~~three years and the investigation is completed within one year~~ after
14 the cause for discipline, upon which the notice is based, first arose.
15 ~~Adverse action based on fraud, embezzlement, or the falsification~~
16 ~~of records shall be valid, if notice of the adverse action is served~~
17 ~~within three years after the discovery of the fraud, embezzlement,~~
18 ~~or falsification.~~