



Commissioner Brad Avakian

Bureau of Labor and Industries

Press Release

For Immediate Distribution

December 21, 2011

CONTACT: Bob Estabrook, 503-709-0730

New Year Brings Changes in Employment Laws

New minimum wage also begins Jan. 1

PORTLAND – A new grant fund to support career and technical education (CTE) in Oregon schools headlines a number of changes to the labor and employment landscape of the state that take effect on January 1, according to summary materials released by the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Commissioner Brad Avakian, head of BOLI, highlighted some of the changes:

The establishment of the Career and Technical Education Revitalization Grant Fund represents a huge victory for Oregon's economy. Even more immediately, we'll see the impact of important legislation strengthening our veterans' preference and uniformed service protections, ensuring protected leave for jury service and victims of harassment, and empowering BOLI to help workers recover damages when their paychecks bounce. Workers can contact BOLI's Civil Rights and Wage and Hour Divisions to get answers to their questions, while the Technical Assistance for Employers Program can assist any Oregon employers with their questions.

Oregon's minimum wage rate is also changing, increasing to \$8.80 per hour starting January 1. Employers can obtain the required minimum wage posters FOR FREE, in both English and Spanish, on [BOLI's website](#).

Avakian's highlights include:

- HB 3362 – promoting statewide cooperation for CTE programs and establishing a grant fund
- SB 277 – guaranteeing veterans' preference points in promotions as well as initial hiring
- HB 2241 - ensuring that Oregon employment law protects all uniformed service members
- HB 2828 and 3034 – protecting employees' insurance and leave benefits during jury service
- HB 3482 – adding victims of harassment to employment protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking
- HB 2039 – allowing employee to recover damages through BOLI for receiving "bounced" paychecks

Additional information about specific bills and a comprehensive list of employment-related laws enacted by the Oregon legislature in 2011 can be found in [BOLI's online summaries](#).

BOLI tracks employment-related law changes as a function of its Technical Assistance for Employers Program (TA), which is the state's primary education and information resource for employers. TA helps employers to comply with civil rights and employment laws and prevent unnecessary worker complaints through both free and low-cost [resources available online](#), by phone (971-673-0824) and at [public and private training seminars](#).

#####

The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.