

**Highlights for Week Ending January 28, 2017**

**STATE OF VERMONT**

**MINIMUM WAGE BILLS INTRODUCED**

Two minimum wage bills were introduced in the House General, Housing & Military Affairs Committee, and one in the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs.

**H. 64 - An act relating to increasing the minimum wage**

Introduced by Representative Poirier of Barre City, this bill proposes to increase the minimum wage to \$11.66 by January 1, 2018; to \$13.32 by January 1, 2019; and to \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2020. In addition, it is proposed that on each subsequent January 1 after 2020, the minimum wage shall be increased by the CPI-U, U.S. city average.

**H. 93 - An act relating to increasing the minimum wage**

Backed by a host of Representatives, this bill proposes to increase the minimum wage to \$11.50 by January 1, 2019; to \$12.50 by January 1, 2020; to \$13.50 by January 1, 2021; and to \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2022. On each subsequent January 1 after 2022, the minimum wage rate shall be increased by five percent or the percentage increase of the CPI-U, U.S. city average, whichever is smaller.

**S.40 – An act relating to increasing the minimum wage**

A number of members of the Senate have proposed to increase the minimum wage so that it reaches \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2022, in a stepped process. As of January 1, 2018, the rate shall be \$10.50; increased to \$12.50 by January 1, 2020; and increased to \$13.50 by January 1, 2021. On each subsequent January 1 after 2022, the minimum wage rate shall be increased by five percent or the percentage increase of the CPI-U, U.S. city average, whichever is smaller, however in no event shall the minimum wage be decreased.

All three proposed bills state that if the minimum wage rate established by the U.S. government is greater than the rate established for Vermont for any given year, the minimum wage rate for that year shall be the rate established by the U.S. government.

The current minimum wage in Vermont is \$10.00, increased on January 1, 2017. Under current law, the minimum wage will increase on January 1, 2018 to \$10.50.

The House and Senate Committees will ask to hear testimony from both employers and employees on the draft legislation.

**APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM UPDATE**

On January 26, Judy Bourbeau, Department of Labor Apprenticeship Supervisor, delivered a presentation to the House Economic Development Committee concerning the State's apprenticeship program. This Committee has had a keen interest in growing workforce training and development opportunities in the state, and will continue to focus on similar initiatives this legislative session.

See the Apprenticeship presentation at:

<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Documents/2018/WorkGroups/House%20Commerce/Vermont%20Apprenticeship%20Programs/W~Judy%20Bourbeau~Vermont%20Registered%20Apprenticeship%20Program%202013-2016~1-26-2017.pdf>

## FEDERAL UPDATE

### **New Form I-9**

Effective January 23, 2017, a new form I-9 became mandatory for usage by employers when hiring new employees. The form is a “smart” pdf and is available online and savable. The form has drop down menus, instructions that pop up when you hover over text with your cursor, and provides error messages. Please note that both the employer and employee must still sign the form I-9. Download the new form and learn more at: [www.uscis.gov/i-9](http://www.uscis.gov/i-9).

### **EEOC Charges Report – Fiscal Year 2016 Data**

In fiscal year 2016, the EEOC handled 91,503 cases of workplace discrimination. This represents a 2.4% increase over the prior year, and charges rose for each major protected characteristic. The largest growing charges were in the category of religious discrimination, representing a 9.2% increase. Over 28,000 of the charges included an allegation of harassment, often in conjunction with a charge of race, age, disability, religion, national origin or sex discrimination. Over \$482 million was distributed on behalf of discrimination victims in fiscal year 2016.

Race Discrimination – 32,309 charges, up 4.1%  
Disability Discrimination – 28,073 charges, up 4%  
Sex Discrimination – 26,936 charges, up 2%  
Age Discrimination – 20,857 charges, up 3.5%

In addition, the EEOC received 42,018 retaliation claims. Retaliation was alleged in 46% of all private sector EEOC complaints.

For more information about the SHRM Vermont State Council Legislative Employment Law and Legislative Advocacy Update, please contact Shelley Field at 802-772-2215 or [shelley.field@casella.com](mailto:shelley.field@casella.com).