

Highlights for Week of April 3, 2017

STATE OF VERMONT

H.109, An act relating to portable employment benefits and contingent workers

Voted out of the House General Committee on March 17 with a 7-4 vote.

H.0170, An act relating to possession and cultivation of marijuana by a person 21 years of age or older

This bill was voted out of the House Judiciary Committee with an 8-3 vote and referred to the House Human Services Committee on March 28.

Specifically, this legislation would legalize the possession of one ounce or less of marijuana, two or fewer mature plants, and seven or fewer immature plants for adults over 21 years of age. These amounts are allowable per dwelling unit if there is more than one adult in said dwelling unit over 21 years of age. Any personal cultivation of marijuana must occur in “in an enclosure screened from public view”.

A recent poll demonstrated that 57% of Vermont residents are in favor of the passage of the bill, Governor Scott is not supportive based on a lack of proven roadside testing for those under the influence of marijuana.

H.196, An act relating to paid family leave

This bill is now before the House Ways & Means Committee, and is a companion bill to S.82.

Before being passed out of the House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs over the objection of several Committee members, the bill was modified to allow employer contributions to be voluntary. Employees would pay a 0.93 percent payroll tax into a Family Leave Insurance Special Fund, estimated to cost the State \$2.5 million in technology system management fees annually. The Joint Fiscal Office has estimated that to replace workers on a temporary basis during a 12 week leave period, the cost annually will have an impact of \$15.4 million.

FEDERAL FOCUS

Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee voted 12-11 to approve the nomination of Alexander Acosta as Labor Secretary. The full Senate will vote to confirm Acosta at a future, yet to be determined date.

During his confirmation hearings on March 22, Acosta did not state whether he would back the proposed \$47,476 overtime salary threshold rule, however, he did acknowledge an increase is appropriate (last increase was in 2004), and suggested an inflation-adjusted number of approximately \$33,000.

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.