It's Official: Connecticut Minimum Wage Will Increase to $15.00 per Hour

May 28, 2019

On May 28, 2019, Governor Ned Lamont signed House Bill No. 5004. The bill, entitled “An Act Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage,” increases Connecticut’s minimum wage to $15.00 an hour over the next approximately four years.

Under the new law, the current $10.10 minimum wage rate will increase pursuant to the following schedule:

1. $11.00 per hour on October 1, 2019;
2. $12.00 per hour on September 1, 2020;
3. $13.00 per hour on August 1, 2021;
4. $14.00 per hour on July 1, 2022; and
5. $15.00 per hour on October 15, 2023.

Following the October 15, 2023, increase, the minimum wage will be tied to the federal employment cost index and will be announced January 1 yearly by the labor commissioner.

Concerning employees under the age of 18 (except for emancipated minors), the law allows employers to pay 85 percent of the minimum wage for the first 90 days of employment to account for training time. However, effective October 1, 2020, the law prohibits employers from replacing current workers in favor of workers under the age of 18 who are not entitled to the full minimum wage.

Furthermore, certain employers in the restaurant and hotel business are still entitled to rely on a “tip credit,” allowing them to use tips received by some servers and bartenders to offset a portion of the minimum wage. The law freezes the minimum wage for these tipped workers—$6.38 for wait staff and $8.23 for bartenders—as long as the employees ensure these servers and bartenders make the minimum wage.

There is also a provision allowing the labor commissioner to recommend against scheduled increases to the minimum wage “[a]fter two consecutive quarters of negative growth in the state’s real gross domestic product” as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Under the law, those recommendations are submitted to the governor, who then submits recommendations to the Connecticut General Assembly as to whether the minimum wage increases should be suspended.
Employers may want to reevaluate their current pay practices to ensure compliance with the increases, which will begin on October 1, 2019.