

January 13, 2025

Update on 2025 Employment Law Developments in California, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey

This memorandum provides an update on multiple employment law developments in several key states. On January 1, 2025, new employment laws in California, Connecticut and New York went into effect. These laws cover a range of topics, including increasing the state minimum wage (CA and NY), expanding employee leave (CA, CT and NY) and strengthening anti-discrimination protections (CA and NY). In addition, effective June 1, 2025, a new pay transparency law will take effect in New Jersey.

California

In California, there are three notable employment law developments that went into effect on January 1, 2025.

First, California has become the first state to expressly recognize the concept of intersectionality in civil rights statutes, a concept that has already been recognized by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the “EEOC”).¹ In September 2024, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed [S.B. 1137](#) into law, effective January 1, 2025, which explicitly incorporates the concept of intersectionality into several existing California anti-discrimination laws.² S.B. 1137 defines intersectionality as “an analytical framework that sets forth that different forms of inequality operate together, exacerbate each other, and can result in amplified forms of prejudice and harm.”³ In particular, S.B. 1137 expands discrimination protection by amending the Unruh Civil Rights Act, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act and the Education Code to prohibit intersectionality-based discrimination.⁴ Such discrimination may be based on the combination of two or more protected characteristics of an employee.⁵

¹ The bill notes that “federal law affords similar protection,” referencing the EEOC’s April 2024 guidance which provides that harassment could stem from “more than one protected characteristic of an employee,” such as race and gender. S.B. 1137, § 1(c), Reg. Sess. 2023-2024 (Cal. 2024) (referencing U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Enforcement Guidance on Harassment in the Workplace*, (Apr. 29, 2024), https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace#_Toc164807993).

² S.B. 1137, Reg. Sess. 2023-2024 (Cal. 2024), https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=2023202405B1137; Cal. Civ. Code § 51(e)(7)(A)-(C); Cal. Educ. Code §§ 200, 210.2; Cal. Gov’t Code §§ 12920, 12926.

³ S.B. 1137, § 1(a), Reg. Sess. 2023-2024 (Cal. 2024).

⁴ *Id.* § 1(b); Cal. Civ. Code § 51(e)(7)(A)-(C); Cal. Educ. Code §§ 200, 210.2; Cal. Gov’t Code §§ 12920, 12926.

⁵ *Id.*

Second, in September, Governor Newsom signed [A.B. 2499](#) into law, effective January 1, 2025, which expands protections for victims of violent crimes or abuse.⁶ Under the new law, an employer with 25 or more employees is prohibited from discharging, discriminating or retaliating against an employee who themselves or whose family members are victims of a “qualifying act of violence” for taking time off for the enumerated reasons listed in the statute.⁷ The new law (i) is no longer limited to employees who themselves are victims of a “qualifying act of violence” and now also covers employees whose family member is a victim;⁸ (ii) expands the definition of “qualifying act of violence” to cover additional conduct resulting in actual or threatened physical injury (in addition to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking);⁹ and (iii) expands the circumstances for which paid leave is available to include, for example, providing care to a family member who is recovering from injuries from a qualifying act of violence.¹⁰

Third, as of January 1, 2025, California’s minimum wage increased from \$16.00 to \$16.50 per hour for all California employees.¹¹ California law, similar to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (the “FLSA”),¹² provides an exemption from overtime pay for “executive, administrative, and professional” employees.¹³ As of January 1, 2025, the minimum salary threshold to satisfy this exemption increased from \$66,560 to \$68,640 per year.¹⁴

Connecticut

In May, Governor Ned Lamont signed [H.B. 5005](#) into law, expanding Connecticut’s paid sick leave law.¹⁵ Previously, the state’s paid sick leave law only covered workers in retail or service occupations and employers with more than 50 employees.¹⁶ As of

⁶ A.B. 2499, Reg. Sess. 2023-2024 (Cal. 2024), https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB2499; Cal. Gov’t Code § 12945.8.

⁷ Cal. Gov’t Code § 12945.8(b)(1)-(10). When taking time off for a reason specified in the statute, an employee is permitted to “use vacation, personal leave, paid sick leave, or compensatory time off.” *Id.* § 12945.8(g).

⁸ *Id.* § 12945.8(b)(1)-(10).

⁹ An act, conduct or pattern of conduct that includes any of the following is covered: (i) in which an individual causes bodily injury or death to another individual; (ii) in which an individual exhibits, draws, brandishes, or uses a firearm, or other dangerous weapon, with respect to another individual; or (iii) in which an individual uses, or makes a reasonably perceived or actual threat to use, force against another individual to cause physical injury or death. *Id.* § 12945.8 (j)(5).

¹⁰ *Id.* § 3(b)(1)-(10).

¹¹ Department of Industrial Relations, *The Labor Commissioner’s Office reminds employers that California’s Minimum Wage Increases to \$16.50 per hour on January 1*, (Dec. 17, 2024), <https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2024/2024-107.html>; Department of Development Services, *Minimum Wage – 2025*, (Dec. 27, 2024), <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/vendor-provider/minimum-wage-2025/>.

¹² For a discussion of the status of the federal rule increasing the standard salary level applicable to “executive, administrative, or professional” employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act, please refer to our [November 22, 2024 Client Memorandum](#).

¹³ See California Labor Code, § 515, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=515; Department of Industrial Relations, *Exemptions from the Overtime Laws*, (last visited Jan. 10, 2025), https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/faq_overtimeexemptions.htm.

¹⁴ Department of Industrial Relations, *California’s Minimum Wage to Increase to \$16 per hour in January 2024*, (Sept. 26, 2023), <https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2023/2023-66.html>; Department of Industrial Relations, *The Labor Commissioner’s Office reminds employers that California’s Minimum Wage Increases to \$16.50 per hour on January 1*, (Dec. 17, 2024), <https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2024/2024-107.html>.

¹⁵ H.B. 5005, 2024 Leg. Sess. (Conn. 2024), <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2024/ACT/PA/PDF/2024PA-00008-R00HB-05005-PA.PDF>.

¹⁶ Governor Ned Lamont, *Governor Lamont Signs Legislation Expanding Connecticut’s Paid Sick Days Laws To Include More Workers* (Apr. 28, 2024), https://portal.ct.gov/governor/news/press-releases/2024/05-2024/governor-lamont-signs-legislation-expanding-paid-sick-days-laws?language=en_US.

January 1, 2025, essentially all employees working for an employer with 25 or more employees in the state are covered.¹⁷ The law will expand coverage to all employees working for employers with one or more employees by January 1, 2027.¹⁸ Additionally, H.B. 5005 increased the rate at which employers are required to provide sick leave to one hour for each 30 hours worked, from one hour for each 40 hours worked.¹⁹

New York

In New York, there are three notable employment law developments. First, as of January 1, 2025, every private sector employer in the state must provide its employees with 20 hours of paid prenatal personal leave.²⁰ Paid prenatal leave is defined as time off “taken for the health care services received by an employee during their pregnancy or related to such pregnancy, including physical examinations, medical procedures, monitoring and testing, and discussions with a health care provider related to the pregnancy.”²¹ The law also bars employers from discriminating, penalizing or retaliating against an employee for taking time off pursuant to the statute.²² New York is the first state to offer employees paid time off for prenatal care.²³ After the law’s enactment, the New York Department of Labor issued guidance clarifying that paid prenatal leave is a “stand-alone benefit.”²⁴ Employers cannot require employees “to choose one leave type over another or require an employee to exhaust one type of leave before using” prenatal leave.²⁵ Additionally, the guidance instructs employers that they may not “ask employees to disclose confidential information about their health condition(s) as a condition of requesting to use [p]aid [p]renatal [l]eave.”²⁶

Second, as of January 1, 2025, the New York minimum wage increased an additional \$0.50 from \$16.00 to \$16.50 in New York City, Westchester, and Long Island, and from \$15.00 to \$15.50 for everywhere else in New York State.²⁷ On January 1, 2026, the minimum wage will increase an additional \$0.50 per hour state-wide.²⁸ Then, starting in 2027, the New York minimum wage state-wide will increase annually based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers to ensure wages keep up with inflation.²⁹ Additionally, as of January 1, 2025, the minimum threshold to qualify for overtime pay exemptions for “executive” or “administrative” in New York increased from \$1,200 per week to \$1,237.50 per week in New York

¹⁷ Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 31-57s(a). Members of a “construction-related tradesperson employee organization” or “seasonal employees” (i.e., someone who works 120 days or less in any year) are exempted. *Id.* § 31-57r(2).

¹⁸ *Id.* § 31-57s(a).

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ N.Y. Lab. Law § 196-b(4)(a).

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.* § 196-b(7).

²³ New York State, *New York State Paid Prenatal Leave*, (last visited Jan. 12, 2025), <https://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-state-paid-prenatal-leave#:~:text=Governor%20Hochul%20is%20committed%20to,medical%20care%20related%20to%20pregnancy>.

²⁴ New York State, *Frequently Asked Questions*, (last visited Jan. 6, 2025), <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-state-paid-prenatal-leave/frequently-asked-questions>.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Governor Kathy Hochul, *New Year, New Laws: Governor Hochul Announces New Policies Taking Effect in 2025 to Put Money Back Into the Pockets of New Yorkers*, (Jan. 3, 2025), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/new-year-new-laws-governor-hochul-announces-new-policies-taking-effect-2025-put-money-back#:~:text=Governor%20Kathy%20Hochul%20secured%20in,tying%20future%20increases%20to%20inflation>.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

City and Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester counties.³⁰ In all other areas, the threshold increased from \$1,124.20 per week to \$1,161.65 per week.³¹

Third, in November, voters in New York approved Proposition 1 which included the Equal Rights Amendment.³² The amendment expanded the state’s constitutional protections against discrimination by expanding the list of protected categories.³³ Previously, the state constitution only barred discrimination because of “race, color, creed, or religion.”³⁴ Now, as of January 1, 2025, the New York constitution prohibits discrimination based on “race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed, religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy.”³⁵ Proposition 1 builds on existing protections under New York State and City Human Rights Laws which bar discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on similar categories, including an individual’s age, race, sex, gender identity or expression, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy or immigration status.³⁶

New Jersey

In November, Governor Philip Murphy signed [S.B. 2310](#) into law, effective June 1, 2025, requiring New Jersey employers to be more transparent about salaries for posted positions and promotional opportunities.³⁷ Under the law, an employer must disclose in each post for new jobs and transfer opportunities that are advertised either externally or internally the hourly wage or salary and a general description of benefits and compensation programs an employee would be eligible for.³⁸ Additionally, an employer must take efforts to make known to all current employees opportunities for promotion that are advertised internally or externally.³⁹ Employer is defined as “any person, company, corporation, firm, labor organization, or association which has 10 or more employees over 290 calendar weeks and does business, employs person, or takes applications for employment within [New Jersey]”.⁴⁰ Employers that violate the law will “be subject to a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$300 for the first violation, and \$600 for each subsequent violation.”

³⁰ Department of Labor, *Minimum Wage Frequently Asked Questions*, (last visited Jan. 6, 2025), <https://dol.ny.gov/minimum-wage-frequently-asked-questions>; Department of Labor, *NYS Minimum Wage Proposed Regulatory Text October 2023*, (Oct. 4, 2023), <https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/09/mw-orders-update-9.20.23.pdf>. Unlike under the FLSA and California law, New York’s minimum threshold increase only affects “executive” or “administrative employees” and does not affect “professional” employees. In New York, “professional” employees are not subject to a minimum salary requirement. *Id.* To qualify for the “professional” employee exemption under New York law, a job must meet two requirements: (1) the employee’s primary duty consists of work that requires advanced knowledge in a field acquired by a prolonged course of specialized study or is original and creative in a recognized field of artistic endeavor; and (2) the employee’s work requires exercise of discretion and judgement, is predominately intellectual, and is of such a character that the result cannot be standardized. *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² Greg Cergol, *NY Prop 1, so-called ‘Equal Rights Amendment,’ passes as state constitutional amendment*, NBC New York (Nov. 6, 2024), <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/new-york/ny-prop-1-equal-rights-amendment-passes/5952548/>.

³³ New York State Board of Elections, *Text of Proposal Number One, An Amendment*, (last visited Jan. 6, 2025), <https://elections.ny.gov/2024-statewide-ballot-proposal>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ See N.Y. Human Rights Law § 296 (Consol. 2024), <https://www.nysestate.gov/legislation/laws/EXC/296>; NYC Commission on Human Rights, *Human Rights*, (last visited Jan. 12, 2025), <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/the-law.page>.

³⁷ S.B. S2310, Leg. Sess. 2023-2024 (N.J. 2024), <https://www.nileg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/S2310/bill-text?f=AL24&n=91>.

³⁸ *Id.* § 1(b).

³⁹ *Id.* § 1(a).

⁴⁰ *Id.* § 1(e).

New Jersey's new law is consistent with changes to pay transparency laws in numerous states across the country. For example, on January 1, 2025, an Illinois law went into effect that requires companies with at least 15 workers to post salary ranges and a description of benefits.⁴¹ Vermont, Minnesota and Massachusetts also passed similar laws in 2024 requiring employers within their states to disclose salary and benefits in all job postings.⁴² Moreover, Colorado, Maryland, Connecticut, Nevada, Rhode Island, Washington, California and New York already have similar pay transparency laws on the books.⁴³ As a result, it is estimated that one in three workers in the U.S. will now have the benefit of a pay transparency law when seeking a job.⁴⁴

Implications for Employers

- Employers in California, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey may want to review and update their internal policies, training and compliance frameworks to align them with these new changes in the law, to the extent relevant to their workforces. By way of example:
 - **California Employers** may wish to a) include a discussion of the concept of intersectionality-based discrimination in any internal policies or training; b) review existing time off benefits to ensure such benefits comply with the expanded protections for victims of violent crimes or abuse; and c) review and update payroll to ensure compliance with the increases in California's minimum wage and minimum salary threshold for overtime pay exemptions.
 - **Connecticut Employers** may want to review and update their existing paid sick leave policies to ensure compliance with Connecticut's expanded sick leave law.
 - **New York Employers** may wish to a) review and update their existing time off benefits to ensure such benefits comply with New York's new paid prenatal leave; b) review and update payroll to ensure compliance with the increases in New York's minimum wage and minimum salary threshold for overtime pay exemptions; and c) review and update any internal anti-discrimination policies or training to include the expanded list of protected categories, to the extent they are not already included.
 - **New Jersey Employers** may want to review their existing job posting policies, trainings and templates to ensure compliance with New Jersey's new pay transparency law.
- Employers in these states may also wish to monitor for any future guidance that may be issued regarding these new laws. In addition, given that California is the first state to expressly prohibit intersectionality-based discrimination, employers may want to monitor for any forthcoming developments in federal or other states' laws on this issue.

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⁴¹ Office of Governor JB Pritzker, *Pay Transparency Law Takes Effect January 1*, (Dec. 16, 2024), <https://gov.illinois.gov/news/press-release.30746.html>.

⁴² See H. 704, Leg. Sess. 2023-2024 (Vt. 2024), <https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/H.704>; S.F. 3725, 93rd Leg., Reg. Sess. (Minn. 2024), https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF3725&version=latest&session=ls93&session_year=2024&session_number=0; Mass.gov, *Governor Healey Signs Wage Equity Legislation*, (July 31, 2024), <https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-healey-signs-wage-equity-legislation>.

⁴³ See Alonzo Martinez, *2024 State-By-State Pay Transparency Laws: Key Insights for Employers*, Forbes (Jan. 14, 2024), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alonzomartinez/2024/06/14/2024-state-by-state-pay-transparency-laws-key-insights-for-employers/>.

⁴⁴ Jeanne Sahadi, *More states now have pay transparency laws. Here's the effect they're having*, CNN (Nov. 13, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/13/business/pay-transparency-laws-by-states/index.html>.

This memorandum is not intended to provide legal advice, and no legal or business decision should be based on its content. Questions concerning issues addressed in this memorandum should be directed to:

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