

Insights, News & Events

EMPLOYER CHEAT SHEET FOR WORKPLACE LAWS TAKING EFFECT IN OCTOBER 2026

Insights
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Employer Cheat Sheet for Workplace Laws Taking Effect in October 2026

The seasons are changing, and so are workplace laws for many states across the country. Employers operating in certain states will see new legislation take effect in October on issues ranging from pay transparency to “captive audience” meetings to immigration-related notices. Here’s your employer cheat sheet to some of the key laws kicking in next month (all laws take effect **October 1, 2026**, unless otherwise noted).

Alabama

- **Ban on non-disclosure provisions related to sexual abuse (SB 30).** Alabama employers will need to ensure that workplace agreements (including nondisclosure, confidentiality, employment, settlement, or other agreements) do not prohibit disclosure of an act of sexual abuse or related facts. Such provisions, if part of an agreement entered into, executed, or amended on or after October 1, 2026, will be void and unenforceable due to new legislation known as “Trey’s Law.”

Connecticut

- **Artificial Intelligence Responsibility and Transparency Act (SB 5).** Earlier this year, Connecticut enacted one of the most comprehensive AI laws in the country, and employers need to start preparing now. The law uses

Related People



David R. Dorey

Partner

202.978.9655



Lauren Laing

Legal Content Counsel

412.822.6623

staggered effective dates, so compliance obligations will roll in over the next two years. The first key date – October 1, 2026 – triggers the anti-discrimination amendments, the developer-deployer framework, and a new WARN Act disclosure requirement. Here are [four important items you should add to your to-do list](#).

- **Major Expansion of Pay Transparency Requirements (Sub. HB 5003, Sec. 2).** Employers will be required to disclose in internal and public job postings: (1) the wages or wage range – which will need to be set in “good faith” – for the position posted, and (2) a general description of the benefits (including health insurance benefits, retirement benefits, fringe benefits, paid leave, and any other compensation other than wages) to be offered with such position.
- **Small Employers No Longer Exempt from Stay-or-Pay Ban (Sub. HB 5003, Sec. 4).** All employers, regardless of size, will be prohibited from requiring, as a condition of employment, an employee (or prospective employee) to execute an employment promissory note requiring the individual to pay the employer a sum of money if they leave such employment within a certain time period (subject to limited exceptions). Prior to October 1, 2026, employers with fewer than 26 employees were exempt from the state’s longstanding stay-or-pay ban.
- **New ADA Accommodation Notice Requirements (Sub. HB 5003, Sec. 30-31).** Employers will be required to provide written notice of an employee’s right under federal law to reasonable accommodations in the workplace for a disability. The notice will need to be provided to new employees upon hire, to existing employees within 120 days of October 1 (by January 29, 2027), and to any employee who notifies the employer of their disability within 10 days of such notification. Employers can satisfy these notice requirements by displaying a poster created by the state’s Labor Commissioner in a conspicuous place that is accessible to employees (though, as of publication, a model poster does not appear to be available yet).
- **Expanded Rights Regarding Lactation Breaks (Sub. HB 5003, Sec. 32).** Employers will be required to provide reasonable break times for an employee to express breast milk for their nursing child or breastfeed at the workplace **in addition** to any scheduled breaks. This is an update to current law, which merely allows employees to express



Braden Lawes

Senior Government Affairs Analyst

[202.916.7176](#)



Sarah Wieselthier

Partner

[908.516.1064](#)

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breastmilk or breastfeed during their meal or break periods.

- **New Paycheck Transparency Rules for Large Employers ([Sub. HB 5003](#), Sec. 38).** Employers with 100 or more employees will be required to create a guide for pay codes for overtime and the employer's most commonly used pay differentials (such as shift differentials, on-call pay, hazard pay, call-back pay, holiday or weekend pay, or geographical pay differentials). Each guide must meet certain content and language requirements, be posted on the employer's website, and be updated each time new pay codes are added (employers can use a third-party payroll services company to meet these requirements). Employers must provide the website address for such guide to employees upon hire and include it on each record of hours furnished to employees (or, alternatively, provide a copy of the guide to an employee upon hire in English and the employee's primary language).
- **Tip Credit Eliminated for Certain Cannabis Workers ([Sub. HB 5003](#), Sec. 6).** The Connecticut Labor Commissioner will no longer recognize gratuities, as part of the [minimum fair wage](#), for **employees at cannabis establishments, dispensaries facilities, or producers**. Such businesses must therefore be prepared to comply with the state's minimum wage rules **without** taking a tip-credit for such employees.
- **Expanded Prevailing Wage Rules ([Sub. HB 5003](#), Sec. 54).** Employers subject to the state's existing prevailing wage requirements will be required to complete detailed daily records of each person performing the work of any mechanic, laborer, or worker at a work site and to meet related recordkeeping and filing requirements. A failure to file will be a class C misdemeanor, and the employer could face a fine of up to \$500, up to three months' imprisonment, or both.
- **Comptroller to Withhold Payment for Prevailing Wage Violations ([SB 268](#)).** When contractors or subcontractors on public works projects are violating prevailing wage laws, the state comptroller will be authorized to stop issuing payments to such contractors until the case is resolved. [Learn more here](#) (governor's press release).
- **Enhanced workers' compensation for certain workers assaulted on the job ([Sub. HB 5003](#), Sec. 1).** "Teachers,

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health care providers, and related employees who cannot work due to an on-the-job assault will now receive 100% of their average weekly earnings (versus the standard 75% after-tax cap), plus medical expenses and lost wages for court appearances," according to a [press release](#) from Governor Lamont.

- **Expanded Notice Rules for Electronic Workplace Surveillance ([Sub. SB 472](#))**. Employers that electronically monitor their employees are required under existing state law to give their employees written notice about such monitoring and post that notice in a conspicuous place accessible to employees. Starting October 1, 2026, that notice must identify the specific workplace locations that may be monitored (unless such premises are an airport or unless the employer has "reasonable grounds" to conduct such monitoring for security and employee safety purposes), and the notice must also be posted in the locations where monitoring may occur. In addition, employers must give prospective employees hired on or after October 1 a written, plain-language statement on prohibited activities that may be monitored without prior written notice.

District of Columbia

- **Universal Paid Leave Reductions (FY 2027 Budget Support Act, [summarized here](#))**. Starting October 1, 2026, the maximum weekly benefit amount will be capped at \$1,100 (a decrease from the current \$1,190 weekly cap) for all benefit types (including parental, medical, family, and prenatal leave) provided through the Universal Paid Leave (UPL) Program managed by the Department of Employment Services (DOES). The weekly benefit amount may be increased for inflation each October 1 (starting in 2027), so long as the Office of the Chief Financial Officer certifies that sufficient UPL funds can support the increase. In addition, the maximum number of weeks allowed will be reduced from 12 weeks to ten weeks for qualifying medical leave for an employee to care for their own serious medical condition and to six weeks for qualifying family leave to care for a sick family member with a serious medical condition. (The maximum number of weeks allowed will remain at 12 weeks for qualifying parental leave and at two weeks for qualifying prenatal leave.) The employer contribution amount will continue to be equal to 0.75% of covered employees' wages. Stay tuned for updated notices from the DOES Office of Paid

Family Leave to ensure compliance with the employer posting requirements.

Maryland

- **Ban on “Captive Audience” Meetings ([SB 417](#)).** Covered employers will be prohibited (subject to limited exceptions) from discharging, disciplining, or otherwise penalizing an employee for declining to attend, participate in, or listen to an employer-sponsored meeting during which the employer communicates its opinion regarding broadly-defined “religious” or “political” matters. Similar protections will apply to applicants. An employee who believes their employer has violated this new “captive audience” meeting ban will have a right to file a complaint with the state’s Commissioner of Labor and Industry, who may, after an investigation, assess a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 for an initial violation (or up to \$25,000 for a subsequent violation) and award other relief, such as reinstatement of the employee and back pay with interest. In addition, employers will need to meet certain notice and posting requirements (the Commissioner is required to make a poster and model notice available on or before November 1, 2026).
- **Ban on Dynamic Pricing for Certain Businesses ([HB 895](#)).** Certain food retailers and third-party delivery service providers will be prohibited from using “dynamic pricing” (sometimes known as “surveillance pricing”) or a consumer’s personal data to set a higher price for [food that is exempt from the state’s sale and use tax](#). Covered businesses will also be prohibited from using protected class data to offer, advertise, or sell a consumer good or service if such use results in withholding or denying from the consumer an accommodation, advantage, or a privilege accorded to others. The Protection From Predatory Pricing Act will be enforced by the Office of Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division, which will issue a notice of violation before taking action and provide the alleged violator with a 45-day cure period. [Learn more about increasing litigation and legislation related to dynamic pricing.](#)

Michigan

- **Youth employment authorizations ([2024 HB 5594](#)).** Starting October 2, 2026, all youth work permits in Michigan must be obtained exclusively through the State

of Michigan's centralized work permit system, and employers must keep work permits on file. [Learn more here](#) (state website on the Youth Employment Standards Act).

New Jersey

- **Controversial ABC Classification Test ([NJDOL Final Rule](#))**. New Jersey businesses should get ready for new regulations on classifying workers as independent contractors under the state's ABC test, which makes it difficult for many companies to treat workers as independent contractors, and for businesses to hire smaller, entrepreneurial businesses. Here's [what businesses need to know about the finalized regulations and three steps you should consider taking now](#).

North Carolina

- **Modernization of the State Human Resources System ([SB 1041](#))**. The state's Human Resources Act repealed and replaced, completely overhauling a wide range of laws related to **State government** employment.

Ohio

- **Loosened Child Labor Restrictions ([HB 455](#))**. Among other changes kicking in **October 9, 2026**, 14- and 15-year olds will soon be permitted to be employed between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. any night preceding a day school is not in session if the minor has approval from a parent or legal guardian. (Under current law, individuals of such age are prohibited from working past 7:00 p.m., except between June 1 and September 1 or during any school holiday of five school days or more). **However**, this change may be of little or no impact to employers subject to more protective provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which supersede state law.

Rhode Island

- **RISavers Program Compliance Deadline for Large Employers ([RISavers website](#))**. A 2024 state law established the RISavers Program, a state-sponsored retirement savings program, and set phased-in enforcement. The first compliance deadline, which applies to eligible employers with more than 100 eligible

employees, is **October 15, 2026**. [Learn more here](#) (official press release).

South Carolina

- **Protected Leave for Civil Air Patrol Service ([SB 1043](#))**. All employers will be required to provide at least 30 days per calendar year of leave for the purpose of response to an emergency service operation of the Civil Air Patrol, as well as at least 10 days per calendar year of leave for the purpose of training and proficiency activities administered by the Civil Air Patrol, US Air Force, FEMA, or other emergency management-related organizations. For private employers, Civil Air Patrol leave may be paid or unpaid (for public employers, such leave must be paid at the employee's current pay rate). The new law includes additional requirements, various exceptions, and employees will have a right to bring a civil action against an employer who allegedly violates the new rules.
- **Expanded Paid Parental Leave for Certain Public Employees ([SB 11](#))**. Changes to South Carolina's paid parental leave law for certain public employees include: extending coverage to eligible state employees working in temporary-grant or time-limited positions; clarifying that stillbirth is a qualifying event; and increasing the amount of required paid leave from two weeks to four weeks for adoption (for employees who are **not** the child's primary caregiver) or foster care placement (other qualifying events will still require six weeks of paid leave).

Vermont

- **Savers Program Penalty Increase ([2023 SB 135](#))**. Vermont requires covered employers with two or more W-2 employees to register for Vermont Saves, a state-sponsored retirement program, if they do not already offer a qualified workplace retirement savings plan. The maximum penalty for a covered employer that fails to comply without reasonable cause will significantly increase on October 1 to \$75 per covered employee.

Washington

- **Immigrant Worker Protection Act ([HB 2105](#))**. Employers will be required to provide a specific notice to each worker (and their representative, if any) within five days of receiving notification from a federal agency of any

inspection of I-9 forms and any related worker records. Employers will also be required to provide a separate notice to affected workers (and their representatives, if any) within five days of receiving results of any such inspection, as well as comply with posting and anti-retaliation requirements. Any individual injured by an alleged violation of these new provisions will be entitled to bring a private cause of action and recover damages and other relief. In addition, the state's attorney general will be authorized to enforce the law, and employers will be required to pay statutory damages of \$500 for each notice failure (doubled for willful violations), subject to a limited exception requiring correction. [Learn more and find model posters and notices here.](#)

Conclusion

We will continue to monitor developments related to all aspects of workplace law. Make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to get the most up-to-date information. If you have questions, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney or the authors of this Insight.