

Federal Overtime Rules Now in Place

Oregon labor commissioner vows to protect workers

Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner believes Oregon's superior worker protections will shield Oregon workers from many of the adverse impacts from new federal overtime rules.

"Luckily, here in Oregon we already have superior legal protections in place in many cases regarding workers and overtime rules," Gardner said. "The good news is that in those cases Oregon's rules are still the law."

In addition to the cases where existing Oregon laws already favor workers, some of the new rules will benefit Oregon workers.

Gardner estimated that as many as 75,000 Oregonians might now qualify for overtime pay under the new federal salary standard that says a worker must earn \$455 a week or more to be considered exempt from overtime.

The exemptions from overtime, commonly referred to as the "white collar" exemptions, are for individuals "engaged in administrative, executive or professional work." Under law, employers who are subject to both state and federal law must apply the standard most beneficial to the employee.

Gardner called the federal effort another case of "smoke and mirrors" and said the resulting confusion over the new rules may hide negative effects upon both employers and workers.

"It is clear the federal government has failed to do what it set out to do and



Sandy Williams, a member of the American Federation of Government Employees, marches during a protest over new overtime regulations outside Labor Department headquarters in Washington, D.C. Monday. (AP photo)

simplify, clarify and better organize the regulations," Gardner said. "Instead, what we now have is complicated and confusing and potentially chaotic."

The confusion might result in years of costly litigation for employers and also means that the state must decide whether to change its laws to reflect the new rules.

Gardner said that despite the expected confusion, he intends to take a clear stance on behalf of Oregon workers.

"I do not intend to allow this confusion to cloud my position regarding protection of Oregon's workers," Gardner said. "In cases where it is unclear which set of rules better protects workers, I intend to exercise my authority as Labor Commissioner to look out for the interests of Oregon workers."

Bush Campaign Sued for Discrimination

(AP) - An African American is accusing the Florida Republican Party and Bush-

Cheney '04 of racial discrimination in a federal lawsuit. Nadia Naffe, a former cam-

paign field director, says she was fired from her job, which she held from August 2003 to April of this year, after she complained about being assigned to work with black organizations, events and issues. Naffe, 25, of Tampa, was the only black field director at the time. She said she was told, "You understand your people."

After refusing the assignments, Naffe said she was called insubordinate and "not a team player." The lawsuit says she contacted the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and was soon after fired.

"Instead of true conservatism, she found herself faced with discrimination and intolerance. And instead of compassion, she found retaliation," said one of Naffe's lawyers, Cyrus Mehri of Washington.

Voting Intimidation Probe Wanted

Lawmakers say minority community targeted

Florida's three black representatives in Congress, called on U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft to conduct an immediate investigation into reports of voter intimidation in Orlando's minority community.

Rep. Alcee Hastings and others cited recent reports of Florida Department of Law Enforcement officers "visiting" voters, the majority of whom were black and elderly, to investigate voter fraud allegations that arose during the Orlando mayoral election this past March.

"Injustice and voter intimidation are again showing their ugly faces in Florida," writes Representatives Hastings, Corrine Brown, Kendrick Meek and others.

The recent reports of voter intimidation come in the wake of Florida Secretary of State

Glenda Hood's announcement to scrap the state's plan to remove more than 48,000 suspected felons from Florida's voting rolls. That action was taken after press reports uncovered that the list was sig-

nificantly flawed. "Property ownership, literacy tests, poll taxes, road blocks, felon purges, and now intimidation of the elderly. When does it end? We had hoped that our children

would grow up in a time when their right to vote would never be at risk. Apparently, that day has not yet come," said Rep. Hastings. "This is just another example in the long list of efforts to stop black folk

from voting. They can't stop us, so now they're trying to scare us. Well, it's not going to work. It's going to take the National Guard to stop us from voting this November, and you can quote me on that."

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Ask Deanna!

Real People. Real Advice.
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Dear Deanna!
I have a live in boyfriend that doesn't work. He told me he wants to be a bachelor and move back home with his mom and other things I didn't want to hear because I love him. I try to let him know I'm there for him and other good stuff, but nothing works. He says he's not ready for a serious relationship at age 21. Should I keep trying or just let him leave? --Anonymous; On Line Reader

Dear Anonymous:
Your young boyfriend wants to sow his wild oats. You'll make the situation worse by trying to change his mind and force him to stay in the relationship. At his age, he should be finishing college or working instead of playing mind games and running home to momma. Respect his honesty and send him on his merry way because you're just as young and still have room to sample life and its many offerings.

Dear Deanna!
My boyfriend's controlling mother has a problem with our relationship because I'm 50 and he's 36. He lives at home but plans to move in with me and we'll marry later. She has made things seem negative to the family and is now trying to push him to get a place and marry me now. This is not our plan but I know he abides by her rules. --Unknown; Tampa, Fla.

Dear Unknown:
Your future mother-in-law thinks you're too close to her age to be dating her son. The thought of her baby fornicating and shacking up with an older woman is also a slap in her face. You're old enough to know that a mother on a mission can't be defeated. Talk with her on a personal level to help her adjust to the age difference. You need to do the right thing concerning your "momma's boy" before this destroys the family and your relationship.

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