
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6149

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senate Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Keiser, Conway, Jayapal, Cleveland, Rolfes, Fraser, Litzow, Fain, Nelson, Habib, Chase, Mullet, Liiias, Pedersen, Takko, Hasegawa, Ranker, Frockt, Hill, Benton, and Billig)

READ FIRST TIME 02/04/16.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing reasonable accommodations in the
2 workplace for pregnant women; and adding a new section to chapter
3 43.10 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.10
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) An employer must provide reasonable accommodations to an
8 employee for a pregnancy-related or childbirth-related health
9 condition if she so requests, with written certification from her
10 licensed health care provider, unless the employer demonstrates that
11 the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the operation of
12 the employer's business. The employee must provide written notice to
13 the employer stating that a health condition related to pregnancy or
14 childbirth requires accommodation.

15 (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, an employee
16 who is pregnant or has a health condition related to pregnancy or
17 childbirth shall not be required to obtain the advice of her licensed
18 health care provider, nor may an employer claim undue hardship, for
19 the following accommodations: (a) More frequent, longer, or flexible
20 restroom, food, and water breaks; (b) seating; and (c) limits on
21 lifting over twenty pounds.

1 (3) The employee and employer shall engage in an interactive
2 process with respect to an employee's request for a reasonable
3 accommodation. To assist in this process, the department shall post
4 information in a printable format, such as a brochure, explaining the
5 respective rights and responsibilities of the employer and the
6 employee who has a health condition related to pregnancy or
7 childbirth. Additionally, the department shall include information in
8 the "Your Rights as a Worker" poster, or similar required workplace
9 poster, regarding these respective rights and responsibilities.

10 (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an
11 employer shall not be required to create a new or additional position
12 in order to accommodate an employee pursuant to this section, and
13 shall not be required to discharge any employee, transfer any other
14 employee with greater seniority, or promote any employee.

15 (5) An employer shall not require an employee who has a
16 pregnancy-related or childbirth-related health condition to accept an
17 accommodation, if such accommodation is unnecessary to enable the
18 employee to perform her job.

19 (6) An employer shall not:

20 (a) Take adverse action against an employee who requests or uses
21 an accommodation under this section that affects the terms,
22 conditions, or privileges of employment;

23 (b) Deny employment opportunities to an otherwise qualified
24 employee if such denial is based on the employer's need to make
25 reasonable accommodation required by this section; or

26 (c) Require an employee to take leave if another reasonable
27 accommodation can be provided for the employee's pregnancy-related or
28 childbirth-related health condition.

29 (7) This section does not preempt, limit, diminish, or otherwise
30 affect any other provision of law relating to sex discrimination or
31 pregnancy, or in any way diminish or limit the coverage for
32 pregnancy, childbirth, or a pregnancy-related health condition.

33 (8) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this
34 section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

35 (a) "Department" means the department of labor and industries.

36 (b) "Director" means the director of labor and industries.

37 (c) "Employee" means an individual employed by an employer.

38 (d) "Employer" means a person engaged in an industry who has
39 fifteen or more employees for each working day in each of twenty or
40 more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year, except

1 that this section does not apply to an entity that is exempt from
2 federal taxation under 26 U.S.C., Sec. 501(c).

3 (e) "Reasonable accommodation" means:

4 (i) Making existing facilities used by employees readily
5 accessible to and usable by employees who have a pregnancy-related or
6 childbirth-related disability;

7 (ii) Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules,
8 reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of
9 equipment or devices, or appropriate adjustment or modifications of
10 examinations;

11 (iii) Temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous
12 position; and

13 (iv) Limits on heavy lifting.

14 (f) "Undue hardship" means an action requiring significant
15 difficulty or expense, when considered in light of the following
16 factors:

17 (i) The nature and cost of the accommodation needed;

18 (ii) The overall financial resources of the facility or
19 facilities involved in the provision of the reasonable accommodation;
20 the number of persons employed by the employer; the effect on
21 expenses and resources; or the impact otherwise of such accommodation
22 upon the employer;

23 (iii) The overall financial resources of the employer; the
24 overall size of the business, including the number of employees; and
25 the number, type, and location of its facilities; and

26 (iv) The type of operation or operations of the employer,
27 including the composition, structure, and functions of the workforce
28 of such employer, the geographic separateness, and administrative or
29 fiscal relationship of the facility or facilities in question to the
30 employer.

31 (9) The attorney general shall investigate complaints and enforce
32 this section. Prior to filing a civil cause of action, a person
33 aggrieved by a violation of this section must file a complaint with
34 the attorney general. The attorney general shall investigate to
35 determine if there has been compliance with this section. If the
36 investigation indicates there is evidence that a violation may have
37 occurred, the attorney general shall issue a written determination
38 stating that a violation may have occurred. If the investigation
39 indicates that there is insufficient evidence that a violation has
40 occurred, the attorney general shall issue a written determination

1 stating that there is insufficient evidence to determine whether a
2 violation has occurred. The attorney general's determination
3 constitutes the final administrative action, but a person may seek
4 judicial review of the determination. A person aggrieved by a
5 violation of this section may pursue a civil cause of action in court
6 only after exhausting the administrative remedy provided under this
7 subsection.

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