CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1217**

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

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| Passed by the House April 14, 2023  Yeas 62 Nays 34  **Speaker of the House of Representatives**  Passed by the Senate April 12, 2023  Yeas 33 Nays 16  **President of the Senate** | CERTIFICATE  I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1217** as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.  Chief Clerk |
| Approved |  |
| **Governor of the State of Washington** | **Secretary of State**  **State of Washington** |

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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1217**

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AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2023 Regular Session

**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Labor & Workplace Standards (originally sponsored by Representatives Ortiz-Self, Fosse, Berry, Reed, Simmons, Gregerson, Ramel, Macri, and Pollet)

AN ACT Relating to improving worker recovery in wage complaints by authorizing the collection of interest and studying other options; and amending RCW 49.48.083.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 49.48.083 and 2011 c 301 s 16 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) If an employee files a wage complaint with the department, the department shall investigate the wage complaint. Unless otherwise resolved, the department shall issue either a citation and notice of assessment or a determination of compliance no later than ((~~sixty~~)) 60 days after the date on which the department received the wage complaint. The department may extend the time period by providing advance written notice to the employee and the employer setting forth good cause for an extension of the time period and specifying the duration of the extension. The department may not investigate any alleged violation of a wage payment requirement that occurred more than three years before the date that the employee filed the wage complaint. The department shall send the citation and notice of assessment or the determination of compliance to both the employer and the employee by service of process or using a method by which the mailing can be tracked or the delivery can be confirmed to their last known addresses.

(2) If the department determines that an employer has violated a wage payment requirement and issues to the employer a citation and notice of assessment, the department may order the employer to pay employees all wages owed, including interest of one percent per month on all wages owed, to the employee. The wages and interest owed must be calculated from the first date wages were owed to the employee, except that the department may not order the employer to pay any wages and interest that were owed more than three years before the date the wage complaint was filed with the department.

(3) If the department determines that the violation of the wage payment requirement was a willful violation, the department also may order the employer to pay the department a civil penalty as specified in (a) of this subsection.

(a) A civil penalty for a willful violation of a wage payment requirement shall be not less than one thousand dollars or an amount equal to ten percent of the total amount of unpaid wages, whichever is greater. The maximum civil penalty for a willful violation of a wage payment requirement shall be twenty thousand dollars.

(b) The department may not assess a civil penalty if the employer reasonably relied on: (i) A rule related to any wage payment requirement; (ii) a written order, ruling, approval, opinion, advice, determination, or interpretation of the director; or (iii) an interpretive or administrative policy issued by the department and filed with the office of the code reviser. In accordance with the department's retention schedule obligations under chapter 40.14 RCW, the department shall maintain a complete and accurate record of all written orders, rulings, approvals, opinions, advice, determinations, and interpretations for purposes of determining whether an employer is immune from civil penalties under (b)(ii) of this subsection.

(c) The department shall waive any civil penalty assessed against an employer under this section if the employer is not a repeat willful violator, and the director determines that the employer has provided payment to the employee of all wages that the department determined that the employer owed to the employee, including interest, within ten business days of the employer's receipt of the citation and notice of assessment from the department.

(d) The department may waive or reduce at any time a civil penalty assessed under this section if the director determines that the employer paid all wages and interest owed to an employee.

(e) The department shall deposit civil penalties paid under this section in the supplemental pension fund established under RCW 51.44.033.

(4) Upon payment by an employer, and acceptance by an employee, of all wages and interest assessed by the department in a citation and notice of assessment issued to the employer, the fact of such payment by the employer, and of such acceptance by the employee, shall: (a) Constitute a full and complete satisfaction by the employer of all specific wage payment requirements addressed in the citation and notice of assessment; and (b) bar the employee from initiating or pursuing any court action or other judicial or administrative proceeding based on the specific wage payment requirements addressed in the citation and notice of assessment. The citation and notice of assessment shall include a notification and summary of the specific requirements of this subsection.

(5) The applicable statute of limitations for civil actions is tolled during the department's investigation of an employee's wage complaint against an employer. For the purposes of this subsection, the department's investigation begins on the date the employee files the wage complaint with the department and ends when: (a) The wage complaint is finally determined through a final and binding citation and notice of assessment or determination of compliance; or (b) the department notifies the employer and the employee in writing that the wage complaint has been otherwise resolved or that the employee has elected to terminate the department's administrative action under RCW 49.48.085.

(6) For all wage complaints filed on or after January 1, 2024, if the department offers the employer the option to resolve a wage complaint without a citation and notice of assessment, and the employer chooses to accept the offer, any settlement must include interest of one percent per month on all amounts owed. The employee may request a waiver or reduction of interest as part of the settlement process.

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