

New Penalties for Wage Claims, Unemployment Discrimination, Payroll Cards On Hearing Agenda

By [Daniel Schwartz](#) on February 27th, 2012

And all of a sudden, things just got very busy at the Connecticut General Assembly.

On Tuesday, several labor & employment law bills are up for discussion and debate at a public hearing scheduled at 2 p.m. (details here). One of the bills is the newest hot topic — the House version of the unemployment discrimination bill I discussed last week.

Some bills have been brought up before including allowing employers to use payroll cards (essentially debit cards) to pay employees instead of via check or direct deposit.

Perhaps the most notable of the bills to be discussed is one (House Bill 5291) that would not only increase the minimum wage, but make sweeping changes to the penalties for failure to pay minimum wage. The penalty would increase from twice the amount to triple and would not provide an offset for wages already paid. More importantly, though, this change would also affect overtime claims — thereby making such violations by an employer extremely costly.

Another bill worth noting is House Bill 5237 that would provide an exception to the American School for the Deaf on its payroll practices for teachers. Typically, this exception is reserved for local or regional boards of education. No word why ASD would get this carve out and not other private schools.

As always, these hearings are open to the public.

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