

HR Magazine Quotes Adam Sencenbaugh on Workplace Laws

August 30, 2018 Adam Sencenbaugh

PRACTICES Wage and Hour Litigation, Employment Litigation, Labor and Employment, Litigation

HR Magazine recently quoted Haynes Boone Partner [Adam Sencenbaugh](#) in an article about employer compliance with complex federal, state and local laws.

Below are excerpts from the article, titled "4 Popular City-Level Workplace Laws to Note."

Minimum-wage laws

The federal minimum wage has been \$7.25 for nearly a decade, but 29 states have higher minimum wages, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Some of those states are gradually raising the rate each year until it reaches \$15 an hour.

But employers need to look beyond federal and state wage requirements.

"Responding to pressure from labor activists and with the support of Democratic leaders, larger cities with a higher cost of living are steadily increasing their minimum-wage rates," noted Adam Sencenbaugh, an attorney with Haynes Boone in Austin and San Antonio, Texas. These are higher than the federal minimum wage and often higher than the state-level minimum wage. Some cities have also adopted tiered minimum-wage rates based on the size of the employer and the particular industry.

Some states block local laws

Although the recent trend is to pass workplace laws at the local level, some states are preventing cities from doing so.

"Many states with Republican legislatures and governors also have one or more large cities with Democratic leadership," Sencenbaugh said. "The state government wants to limit cities' abilities to tinker with the minimum-wage rates to reduce complexity for businesses that operate across the state or in multiple states," he observed.

For example, after St. Louis raised its minimum wage to \$10 an hour in May 2017, Missouri state legislators passed a law that blocked cities from enforcing higher minimum wages than the statewide rate, which is currently \$7.85. Missouri residents, however, will have the opportunity in November to vote on an incremental wage hike to \$12 an hour by 2023.

For employers with multisite operations, keeping up-to-date on local wage ordinances is a constant challenge, Sencenbaugh noted. Employers also have to consider the negative impact on employee morale if wage increases are rescinded, he added. "Even if the wage cut is lawful, it might be too harmful for employee recruiting and retention efforts to make business sense."

To read the full *HR Magazine* article, click [here](#).