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NEW LAWS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Happy New Year. This newsletter references certain new legislation which may be of interest to our current clients.

1. Pink Tax

In California, substantially similar products from the same company shall not be priced differently based on the gender of the intended customer. (Think pink razors.)

2. Housing

a. Homeowners may add up to two bedrooms within an existing dwelling unit despite local zoning rules to the contrary.

b. Certain development along strip malls will be fast-tracked to skip lengthy and costly local review processes.

c. Governments shall not implement minimum parking requirements for projects within a half-mile of public transit.

3. Felons

May now obtain expungement of criminal records for all felonies, not just lesser felonies, if an individual is not on probation, involved in another case, and sufficient time has elapsed. Sex offenders will not be eligible.

4. Bicycles

Drivers must change lanes when passing a cyclist if feasible; governments shall not impose license laws; e-bike access is expanded; and bikes may cross streets on pedestrian walk signals.

5. Retail Theft

A state website was created to receive reports of stolen items and police shall detain those accused of organized retail theft.

6. Employment

a. Pay Transparency - Employers must provide applicants and workers with salary ranges for available job positions and follow new pay data reporting requirements based on gender and race.

b. Marijuana - Employers may not discriminate against employees or job applicants based on their use of cannabis off the job, but can continue pre-employment drug testing and reject candidates testing positive for a psychoactive drugs.

c. Bereavement Leave - It is illegal for even small companies to deny most workers five days unpaid leave upon the death of a family member.

d. COVID - Employers must notify anyone at a work site of a potential COVID-19 exposure, in writing, within a day of discovery, and report cases to local health departments.

e. The statewide minimum wage was raised on January 1 from \$14 to \$15.50 per hour.

f. California farmworkers may now vote by mail in union elections rather than being required to vote in person.

7. Abortion

Persons who choose to end a pregnancy, and those who assist them, are protected from prosecution even if an abortion is self-induced or happens outside the medical system, and coroners will no longer investigate stillbirths.

8. Guns

a. Private citizens may now collect \$10,000 by suing those who make or sell "ghost guns" or assault-style weapons.

b. Persons convicted of misdemeanor child or elder abuse are prohibited from possessing firearms in California.

c. Gun violence victims, prosecutors, and the state may sue firearms manufacturers for damage their weapons cause.

9. Corpses

Turning human bodies into soil ["human composting"] is now allowed, licensed, and regulated as an after-death option.

10. Doctors

It is now easier for the Medical Board of California to punish health care providers who deliberately spread false information about COVID-19, vaccines, or treatment.

11. Colleges

Community colleges must now enroll most students in a transfer-level math and English *course if their program requires* those subjects.

12. Fur Law

California now bans the sale and manufacturing of new fur clothing and accessories, but not used fur products, leather, cowhide, faux fur, or shearling.

13. Holidays

California now observes Juneteenth as a state holiday on June 19; April 24 as Genocide Remembrance Day; and removes the annual requirement that Lunar New Year be an annual state holiday.

14. Jaywalking

Pedestrians may now lawfully cross a street in mid-block if done safely.

15. Petroleum

New oil and gas wells, or extensive retrofitting, is prohibited within 3,200 feet of homes, schools, nursing homes, and hospitals.

16. Immigration

Disclosure of a person's immigration status in a criminal courtroom is prohibited unless approved by the judge.

17. Homelessness

There is a new court framework to force people with serious mental illnesses into housing and medical treatment.

18. Animals

Hunting destructive and invasive wild pigs, whose population is increasing in California, will now be less regulated.

19. Automobiles

Only an automobile dismantler, repair dealer, or a person presented with proper ownership documentation may lawfully re-sell or recycle catalytic converters.

20. Hotels

Are now subject to civil penalties if employees fail to inform police officials of sex trafficking at their establishment.

21. Police

a. Are no longer required to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents to become police officers in California; they need only be legally authorized to work in the country.

b. Shall not block journalists from covering protests and demonstrations.

22. Hate Crimes

Penalties are increased for persons who use hateful symbols, such as swastikas, nooses, or desecrated crosses, at certain locations, including K-12 schools and colleges.

23. Real Property

All surplus state property shall be audited to determine what land might be suitable for housing construction.

24. Internet

A system is created to deploy statewide broadband to provide improved connectivity for low-income and underserved communities.

25. Nurse Practitioners

Those in high-need areas may perform surgical, or aspiration, abortions, and practice independently without physician oversight.

26. Drivers

Those convicted of street racing or excessive speeding causing a death can now be charged with vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence.

27. Education

California students will soon be required to take ethnic studies to graduate high school.

28. Prisons

Prisons and jails must provide inmates free phone service.

This practice serves as a "lawyer of first resort", or "primary care attorney," advocating for small businesses and individuals with disputes and transactions, including accident victims by referral only. We specialize in personalized client service. If we can be of any assistance with your legal issues, consider contacting us as soon as a question is identified. Your recent referrals have been greatly appreciated.

Remember: Preventative lawyering is the most effective kind.

Happy New Year,



HARMON SIEFF