

By: Bowers

H.B. No. 2501

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the ability of a nonexempt employee to participate in certain academic, extracurricular, and developmental activities of the employee's child.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle D, Title 2, Labor Code, is amended by adding Chapter 83 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 83. EMPLOYEE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

IN CERTAIN ACTIVITIES OF EMPLOYEE'S CHILD

Sec. 83.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Employee" means a person other than an independent contractor who, for compensation, performs services for an employer under a written or oral contract of hire, whether express or implied. The term includes an employee engaged to work flexible hours established periodically by the employer.

(2) "Employer" means a person who employs more than 50 employees in this state, regardless of whether those employees are exempt from the overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. Section 201 et seq.). The term includes a public employer.

(3) "Reasonable advance written notice" means the period, determined by the employer, for an employee to provide written notice of the employee's planned absence under this chapter.

1 Sec. 83.002. APPLICABILITY. This chapter applies to an
2 employee who:

3 (1) is a parent as defined by Section 101.024, Family
4 Code, legal guardian, custodial caregiver, managing conservator,
5 or possessory conservator of a child who is in a licensed or
6 certified child-care facility or prekindergarten through grade 12;

7 (2) has been employed for not less than 90 days by the
8 employer granting the unpaid time off; and

9 (3) is not exempt from the overtime provisions of the
10 federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. Section 201 et
11 seq.).

12 Sec. 83.003. EMPLOYEE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN CERTAIN
13 ACTIVITIES OF EMPLOYEE'S CHILD. (a) An employee who is subject to
14 this chapter is entitled to unpaid time off as provided by this
15 section to:

16 (1) meet with a teacher, counselor, or school
17 administrator of the employee's child or with a caregiver of the
18 child in a child-care facility; or

19 (2) participate in a facility or school activity of
20 the employee's child, including award ceremonies, school
21 productions or events in which the child is participating, or
22 hearings regarding admission, review, or dismissal.

23 (b) Except as limited by Subsection (c), an employee is
24 entitled under this section to up to four hours of time off at one
25 time in any one-year period for each of the employee's children for
26 whose activities the employee is entitled to time off under this
27 chapter.

1 (c) An employee is not entitled to take time off under this
2 section more than two times in a one-month period.

3 (d) Before taking time off under this section, an employee
4 must provide the employer with reasonable advance written notice of
5 the planned absence of the employee, unless the need for the absence
6 was not reasonably foreseeable. The notice must include the date
7 and time of the planned absence and a brief description of the
8 meeting or activity in which the employee will be participating. An
9 employer may not require notice under this subsection of more than
10 five calendar days.

11 Sec. 83.004. USE OF LEAVE TIME. (a) An employee may, but is
12 not required to, use existing vacation leave time, personal leave
13 time, or compensatory leave time for the purpose of a planned
14 absence authorized by this chapter except as otherwise provided by
15 a collective bargaining agreement entered into before September 1,
16 2019.

17 (b) The use of leave time under this section may not be
18 restricted by a term or condition adopted under a collective
19 bargaining agreement entered into on or after September 1, 2019.

20 Sec. 83.005. DOCUMENTATION. (a) An employee shall provide
21 documentation to the employer of the employee's attendance at a
22 meeting or participation in a particular activity on the employer's
23 request. An employer may waive the documentation requirement.

24 (b) For purposes of this section, "documentation" means any
25 verification of parental attendance at a meeting or participation
26 in a facility or school activity that the child's facility or school
27 considers reasonable and appropriate.

1 Sec. 83.006. SAME EMPLOYER. If both parents of a child are
2 employed by the same employer at the same workplace, the
3 entitlement granted under Section 83.003 may be exercised as
4 regards a specific meeting or activity of that child only by the
5 employee who first gives notice to the employer as required under
6 Section 83.003(d). The other parent is entitled to time off to
7 attend the meeting or activity only as approved by the employer.

8 Sec. 83.007. EMPLOYER RETALIATION PROHIBITED. (a) An
9 employer may not suspend or terminate the employment of, or
10 otherwise discriminate against, an employee who takes a planned
11 absence authorized by this chapter to attend a meeting or
12 participate in an activity of the employee's child if the employee
13 has fulfilled the requirements of Section 83.003(d).

14 (b) An employee whose employment is suspended or terminated
15 in violation of this chapter is entitled to:

16 (1) reinstatement to the employee's former position or
17 a position that is comparable in terms of compensation, benefits,
18 and other conditions of employment;

19 (2) compensation for wages lost during the period of
20 suspension or termination;

21 (3) reinstatement of any fringe benefits and seniority
22 rights lost because of the suspension or termination; and

23 (4) if the employee brings an action to enforce this
24 subsection and is the prevailing party, payment by the employer of
25 court costs and reasonable attorney's fees.

26 (c) An employer may not decline to interview or hire an
27 applicant solely because the applicant is a parent, legal guardian,

1 custodial caregiver, managing conservator, or possessory
2 conservator of a child in a licensed or certified child-care
3 facility or prekindergarten through grade 12.

4 Sec. 83.008. NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES. (a) Each employer shall
5 inform its employees of their rights under this chapter by posting a
6 conspicuous sign in a prominent location in the employer's
7 workplace.

8 (b) The Texas Workforce Commission by rule shall prescribe
9 the design and content of the sign required by this section.

10 SECTION 2. This Act applies only to a suspension,
11 termination, or other adverse employment action that is taken by an
12 employer against an employee because of an employee absence
13 authorized under Chapter 83, Labor Code, as added by this Act, that
14 occurs on or after the effective date of this Act. Action taken by
15 an employer against an employee for an employee absence occurring
16 before that date is governed by the law in effect on the date the
17 absence occurred, and the former law is continued in effect for that
18 purpose.

19 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.