



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Pat Quinn
Governor

Catherine M. Shannon
Director

ADVISORY NOTICE

Senate Bill 1770 (Public Act 96-0635) Changes to the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA) Effective August 24, 2009

Public Act 96-0635 amends the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA) by changing Sections 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 40 of the Act.

Prior to Public Act 96-0635, the Act applied to employers with at least 50 employees. Now, "Employer" is redefined as (A) the State or any agency of the State; (B) any unit of local government or school district; or (C) any person that employs at least **15** employees. For employees with a family or household member who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, the definition of "Family or household member" has been expanded to include persons related by blood or by present or prior marriage and persons who share a relationship through a son or daughter. The Act continues to cover a spouse, parent, son, daughter and persons residing in the same household.

The Act also provides that an employee working for an employer with at least 15, but not more than 49 employees, shall be entitled to a total of **8** workweeks of leave during any 12-month period. Employees working for an employer with at least 50 employees are still entitled to a total of **12** workweeks of leave during any 12-month period. The total number of workweeks to which an employee is entitled shall not decrease during the relevant 12-month period.

VESSA now explicitly states that employers may **not** require employees to substitute available paid or unpaid leave for the leave permitted under VESSA.

Other changes concerning legislative findings; definitions of "domestic violence," "electronic communications," "employment benefits," and "stalking"; purposes of the Act; notice to an employer of an employee's intention to take leave; victims' employment sustainability, prohibited discriminatory acts; and notification to employees, as well as a full-text version of the amendments, may be found at: <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/96/PDF/096-0635.pdf>.

For further information about the Act or if you have any questions regarding these changes, please call (312) 793-6797.

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