

Employer Alert: Missouri Passes

Domestic Violence Leave Law

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A new Missouri law just took effect in August requiring employers to provide unpaid leave to employees who have been subjected to domestic or sexual violence or who have certain family members who have been subjected to such violence. This law is known as the Victims' Economic Safety and Security Act ("VESSA").

While many other states (like Illinois) have had such a law on the books for some time, Missouri has not, so the requirements of this law may come as a surprise to Missouri employers. Some of the features of this law will include:

- Having to provide employees unpaid leave for 1-2 weeks, depending on the size of the employer;
- Having to provide reasonable safety accommodations if an employee requests and properly certifies the need for them;
- Having to preserve and maintain the same terms and conditions of employment (including benefits) until the employee returns to work after the leave period.

It is important for Missouri employers to understand what exactly the new VESSA law requires (and to whom it will apply). Some of these new legal requirements already apply, but others, like providing notice to employees of their rights under the new law, will take effect as early as October 2021. Failing to timely adhere to these requirements may lead to unanticipated issues and/or liabilities or other needless disruptions to your business.

While Missouri's new VESSA law is similar to other states' VESSA laws, it is not identical. So it is particularly important for Missouri employers to retain knowledgeable counsel here in Missouri to review their employment policies and practices. Since the law has taken effect (and certain notice requirements will take effect very soon), now is the time to reach out and conduct such a review with professional help.

Our Team at Sandberg Phoenix has the knowledge and experience you need to understand how this new law may impact you or your business. Do not hesitate to contact a member of our Team to discuss these developments further, what policy changes and staff training may be appropriate, and what the new law generally means for you and your business.