



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
GOVERNOR DANIEL P. MALLOY

GOV. MALLOY: LABOR DEPARTMENT RECOVERS MORE THAN \$6.5 MILLION IN OWED WAGES FOR WORKERS

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy today announced the state Department of Labor’s Division of Wage and Workplace Standards recovered more than \$6.5 million in unpaid wages for Connecticut workers during the fiscal year that ended June 30.

“As we approach Labor Day, we should reflect on our responsibility to ensure that working men and women are paid for the jobs they do and receive the wages they rightfully earn,” Governor Malloy said. “The \$6.5 million collected by the Labor Department’s investigation reflects the importance we place on protecting our state’s workforce, as well as law-abiding employers. Putting a stop to bad business practices, including the failure to pay fair wages, helps our workers as well as the entire state economy.”

According to Connecticut Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer, the \$6,564,848.58 returned to workers is \$20,000 more than was recovered last year. This included more than \$3 million recovered by wage enforcement staff responding to 2,776 complaints that owed wages had not been paid. An additional \$1,241,282.79 was provided to employees that did not receive required minimum wage or overtime, and another \$2,067,543.09 was owed to workers that were not paid the correct amount while working at public contract construction sites.

“Protecting Connecticut’s workforce is critical to strengthening our economy and creating a vigorous business climate,” said Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman. “Ensuring workers are paid fairly and expediently, that people aren’t working while sick, and that minimum wage earners can better support themselves and their families are keys to enhanced economic stability and quality of life. I applaud Commissioner Palmer and her team on their work.”

“It is the mission of our Wage and Workplace Standards Division to ensure that all of our laws – be it those pertaining to minimum wage, overtime or child labor – are understood and followed by all employers,” Commissioner Palmer said. “Our goal is to meet the needs of Connecticut’s workforce and strengthen knowledge of the state’s labor laws. As a result, education and outreach to workers and employers is just as vital as our enforcement efforts.”

The Connecticut Department of Labor’s Wage and Workplace Standards Division also investigated 392 cases involving labor law violations, with inspectors citing employers in the following areas: personnel file violations, permitting night work of minors in manufacturing and mechanical businesses, the improper work hours of minors, hazardous employment of minors, and minors working in prohibited jobs, among other violations.

The following wages were recovered in fiscal year 2013-2014 by the agency's Wage and Workplace Standards Division:

Wage Enforcement:	\$3,053,199.60 to 2,776 employees
Public Contract Compliance:	\$ 2,067,543.09 to 424 employees
Wage and Hour:	\$1,241,282.79 to 1,178 employees
Service Contract Compliance:	\$202,823.10 to 376 employees
Total wages recovered:	\$6,564.848.58

According to Gary K. Pechie, Director of the agency's Division of Wage and Workplace Standards, the wages were recovered in accordance with General Statutes Title 31, Chapter 557, Part III, and Chapter 558. He noted that Wage investigators also issued 172 Stop Work orders to employers who did not comply with state worker's compensation requirements. Following on-site investigations, these companies lacking proper coverage were required to cease work on a construction project until required workplace regulations were met. In some cases it was determined that employers misrepresented employees as independent contractors – a practice that causes an economic disadvantage to other companies.

Following its first full year of partnering with the Office of the Chief State's Attorney to fight unemployment insurance fraud, the agency also recovered over \$525,000 from more than 70 individuals who were arrested for collecting UI benefits to which they were not entitled. The fighting fraud program, which includes additional recovery efforts through wage garnishments, fraud detection software and interception of state and federal tax refunds, has allowed the agency to recover more than \$10 million that has been returned to the state's fund for paying unemployment benefits.

Employers and workers can visit the agency's website, www.ct.gov/dol (located under "Wage and Workplace Standards") for more information about their rights and responsibilities in regard to state and federal wage laws. The site also contains information on re-employment programs, services for veterans and free safety consultations for employers.

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