



December 2015 Government Affairs Update

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FEDERAL ISSUES

HOTEL INDUSTRY FIGHTS ANTI-FRANCHISE “JOINT EMPLOYER” RULE

The American Hotel & Lodging Association and business groups cooperating through the Coalition to Save Local Business are actively working with members of Congress to secure the inclusion of language in the year-end omnibus spending bill to block the National Labor Relations Board’s (NLRB) *Browning-Ferris Industries* decision. This decision, reported in previous updates, would counteract 30 years of American labor laws and create uncertainty for business owners and hotel operators. Grassroots pressure from professionals in our industry and other businesses can help restore the previous definition of “joint employer.” while protecting small businesses and the franchise model.

Visit action.savelocalbusinesses.com to send a message asking your Member of Congress to support this legislation.

CONGRESS LOOKS AT VISA WAIVER PROGRAM IN WAKE OF TERROR ATTACKS

Federal lawmakers are considering changes that could impact the visa waiver program. The American Hotel & Lodging Association supports H.R. 158, a bill recently passed by the U.S. House which would make changes to the program, including a prohibition on travelers who have recently been to Iraq or Syria from using the visa waiver program. AHLA states that its goal in regard to visa waiver changes is to help ensure that as Congress makes changes to visa waiver and other travel programs, it does not take imprudent steps that would severely damage the lodging industry and the broader economy, while failing to provide meaningful improvements in security.

OVERTIME CHANGES REMAIN ON TRACK TO DING EMPLOYERS & EMPLOYEES

Hoteliers and other business operators continue to ask about the status of changes to federal overtime rules. The U.S. Department of Labor's proposed changes to overtime regulations are expected to take effect beginning in 2016. Under the new rules, the annual salary threshold of employees eligible for overtime pay will more than double from \$23,660 to \$50,440. The rules would exempt Executive, Administrative and Professional employees, with very specific definitions of the job duties for those employees. Other employees who are not exempt will be required to be paid overtime at 1.5 times their hourly rate for all hours in excess of 40 worked each week.

The public comment period on the proposed changes expired Sept. 4. Many comments were submitted, including by OH&LA and other industry partners. The final rules – which hopefully takes the high amount of comments into account – will be promulgated by the Department of Labor in early 2016.

STATE ISSUES

OHIO VOTERS REJECT MARIJUANA BALLOT MEASURE, APPROVE ANTI-MONOPOLY AND REDISTRICTING ISSUES

Ohioans voted down State Issue 3, a proposal to legalize recreational marijuana, by a larger-than-expected majority. Official results showed the measure failed 64% to 36%. It was rejected by a majority of voters in each of Ohio's 88 counties.

Marijuana supporters reportedly spent more than \$25 million to try to pass Issue 3, outspending those opposed by 10-to-1. But more than 140 business, community, health, social services, and local government organizations, including OH&LA, banded together to educate citizens about the negative impacts of Issue 3. The "No on 3" campaign said this kind of support and effort made the difference. OH&LA received national recognition for its voter education communications related to Issue 3.

Voters also approved anti-monopoly protections for the Ohio Constitution, 52% to 48%, and a measure that will implement reforms to the way Ohio draws state legislative districts, by 71% to 29%.