HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE, 2020 STATE OF HAWAII H.B. NO. ²²⁷³ H.D. 1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WAGES.

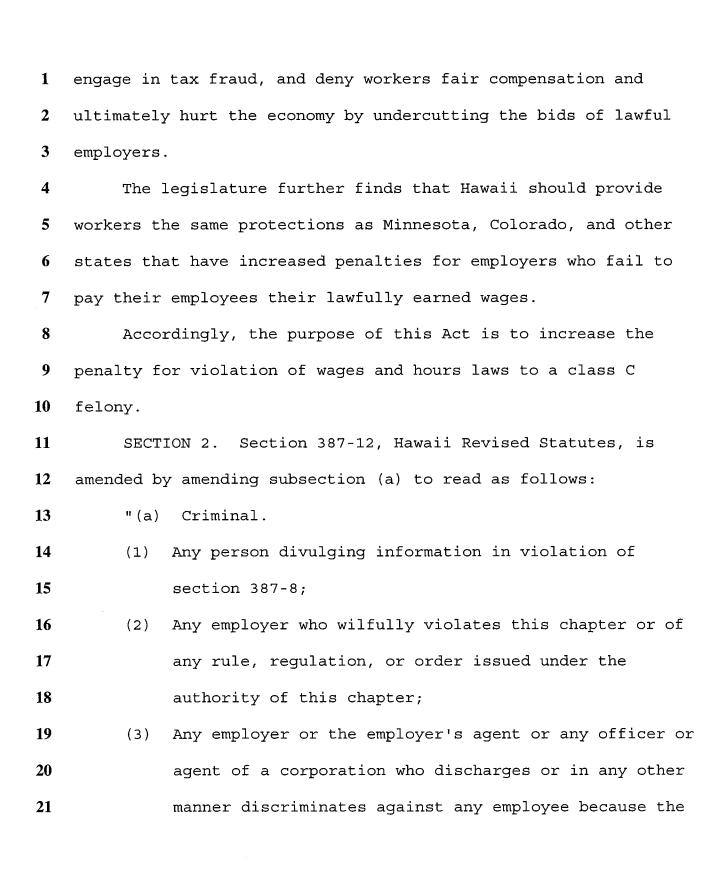
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that state labor laws 2 should protect workers from employers who fail to pay their 3 employees. Other states have recently increased penalties for 4 employers who wilfully commit wage theft. In 2019, Minnesota 5 passed the Wage Theft Prevention Act to create additional 6 protections for workers, including adding criminal penalties for employers that commit this offense. Now, in Minnesota, an 7 8 employer may be criminally charged based on the amount of money 9 withheld from the employee. This escalating penalty scale is 10 analogous to the various theft charges in which a stolen \$10 11 item could result in a misdemeanor charge and a \$1000 item could 12 result in a felony charge.

In 2019, Colorado passed the Human Right to Work With Dignity Act, which reclassified the intentional nonpayment of over \$2,000 in wages as a felony theft. The purpose of the Colorado law was to ensure accountability for unscrupulous employers who purposefully withhold wages, underpay workers,

HB2273 HD1 HMS 2020-1010

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employee has made a complaint to the employee's 1 employer, to the director, or to any other person that 2 the employee has not been paid wages in accordance 3 with this chapter, or has instituted or caused to be 4 instituted any proceeding under or related to this 5 chapter, or has testified or is about to testify in 6 7 any such proceedings; or Any employer or the employer's agent or any officer or 8 (4)agent of a corporation who pays or agrees to pay any 9 employee compensation less than that which the 10 employee is entitled to under this chapter, 11 shall be guilty of a [misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, 12 shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than 13 \$500 or by imprisonment for a period not to exceed one year or 14 by both such fine and imprisonment.] class C felony." 15 16 SECTION 3. Section 388-10, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows: 17 "(b) Criminal. Any employer who does not pay the wages of 18 any of the employer's employees in accordance with this chapter, 19 or any officer of any corporation who knowingly permits the 20 corporation to violate this chapter by failing to pay wages of 21

HB2273 HD1 HMS 2020-1010

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1	any of its employees in accordance with this chapter, or any
2	employer or the employer's agent or any officer or agent of a
3	corporation who discharges or in any other manner discriminates
4	against any employee because the employee has made a complaint
5	to the employee's employer, or to the director, or to any other
6	person that the employee has not been paid wages in accordance
7	with this chapter, or has instituted or caused to be instituted
8	any proceeding under or related to this chapter, or has
9	testified or is about to testify in any such proceedings, or any
10	employer who wilfully fails to comply with any other
11	requirements of this chapter shall be [fined not less than \$100
12	nor more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than one year,
13	or punished by both fine and imprisonment for each such
14	offense.] guilty of a class C felony."
15	SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
16	matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
17	begun before its effective date.
18	SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
19	and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.
20	SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2050.

HB2273 HD1 HMS 2020-1010

Page 4

Report Title: Wages; Penalties

Description: Increases the penalty for violation of wages and hours laws to a class C felony. Effective 1/1/2050. (HD1)

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