

ADVOCATING FOR BUSINESS

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Chamber urges state leaders to adopt flexible workplace scheduling

The California Chamber of Commerce is leading an effort to urge employers and employees to contact Governor Schwarzenegger and our state legislators to ask them to adopt legislation that would allow greater flexibility in individual employee work schedules. The Tulare Chamber has already communicated with Sacramento on this issue, and we encourage our members to write letters including examples of how these rules affect your business.

On November 6, Gov. Schwarzenegger called a special session of the Legislature and proposed a combination of cuts, taxes and economic stimulus measures to address a budget deficit now estimated at more than \$11 billion. The Governor's proposals called for providing overtime exemptions and allowing more flexible work schedules to increase productivity to keep high-paying jobs in the state, as well as clarifying meal and rest period rules to save businesses litigation costs.

With the economy being in the worst state we have seen in years and many businesses being forced to scale back their operations or shut down altogether, our troubled economy is too fragile to continue to subject California businesses to an environment that promotes unjustified and unreasonable class action litigation, or one that forces them to incur additional costs in overtime pay;

Under current law, employers may institute alternative work schedules only if a supermajority of affected employees agrees to the arrangement by secret ballot. Then, all employees in the work unit are subject to alternative scheduling. Therefore, more than one schedule is prohibited without repeating the voting process, and an employee does not have the option to return to a traditional workweek schedule without the secret ballot process taking place again.

Any deviation from this complex process voids the election and subjects the employer to potential lawsuits that can seek up to three years of back overtime pay for affected workers. This effectively eliminates most employers and employees from choosing alternative options, and creates a hardship for many employees who would rather work a longer shift in order to have more time off with their families.

Allowing more flexible work schedules will not only help employees by providing them with scheduling options to accommodate family obligations, personal pursuits and commuting issues, but will also reduce traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

Flexibility in daily overtime rules benefits both employers and employees; . Employees could request to work four-10 hour days a week, which would provide them with up to 50 extra days off work each year, which for many, would provide a better work-life balance. It would also help employers to avoid costly penalties and overtime charges.

If you agree that workplace scheduling flexibility would be good for your business and your employees, please communicate with our state representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Roy Ashburn State of California

State Capitol Room 3060, Sacramento, CA 95814 916-651-4018 - phone 916-322-3304 - fax

Assemblywoman Connie Conway State of California,

State Capitol Room 5160 Sacramento, CA 95814 916-319-2034 - phone 916-319-2134 - fax

Hold your next meeting or party in the Chamber's banquet room

If you are looking for a comfortable and convenient place to host your next business meeting, seminar or social gathering, look no further than the Chamber's Banquet Room.

Located at the back of the Chamber Building at 220 E. Tulare Ave. in the heart of downtown, the room seats up to 82 people, has easily accessible restrooms and plenty of onsite and nearby parking. A convenient separate entrance allows your guests to enter directly into the room without having to walk through the Chamber office.

If your event requires catering, decorations or entertainment, Chamber staff would be happy to assist you with a list of Chamber member caterers and party planners who can meet your every need.

So, if you need a place to provide employee training, have a meeting in a central location, or hold a birthday or anniversary party, consider this option!

Basic room rental is just \$100 per day, which is a bargain compared to many other meeting and event facilities. To learn more or to reserve this space for your next event, call the Chamber office at 686-1547.