

The January Review

The *Review* begins 2010 with its annual account of labor legislation in the article “State labor legislation enacted in 2009,” by John J. Fitzpatrick, Jr., James L. Perine, and Bridget Dutton, from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment Standards Administration. The article tracks and highlights a wide range of labor law categories including drug and alcohol testing, equal employment opportunity, human trafficking, immigration protections, independent contractors, the minimum wage, prevailing wages, wages paid, and worker privacy. As the authors point out, States enacted a greater volume of labor-related legislation in 2009 than in 2008, with 46 of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands enacting or amending labor legislation during the year. Minimum wage was a “hot-button” issue, primarily because a number of States have laws that require them to keep their minimum wage higher than the Federal one. So, as a result of the Federal rate increasing to \$7.25 per hour in 2009, a number of States increased their rates in response. Other States made adjustments to their minimum wage rates as well, primarily because of State laws requiring them to implement annual cost-of-living increases.

This issue’s second article focuses on changes in unemployment insurance laws. In “Changes in State

unemployment insurance legislation in 2009,” Loryn Lancaster, an unemployment insurance program specialist with the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration, begins the article by highlighting five key Federal legislative enactments. Two of the more commonly known enactments—The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and The Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009—are among those discussed which extend benefits and provide Federal funds to States. The article also includes summaries of significant revisions to State unemployment insurance laws, many of which also include new minimum and maximum weekly benefit amounts and new confidentiality and disclosure guidelines.

“Silicon Valley is the largest and most influential high-tech center in the world,” say Amar Mann and Tian Luo in “Crash and reboot: Silicon Valley high-tech employment and wages, 2000–08.” Mann and Luo, economists at the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ West Regional Office for Economic Analysis and Information, examine the trends in Silicon Valley high-tech employment and wages during the 2000-to-2008 period. The authors find that employment and wages declined precipitously from 2000 to 2004 during the infamous “dot-com” bust, but also that both increased gradually from 2004 to 2008. The article also discusses the various factors affecting

the decline and growth of specific high-tech industries and examines trends in wage distribution and generation. Finally, the article analyzes the geographic concentration of high-tech employment in Silicon Valley and how it has changed over the 8-year period.

This issue of the *Review* concludes with a research summary by Gary Chaison, professor of Industrial Relations in the Graduate School of Management at Clark University. In the report “Union Membership Attrition,” Professor Chaison examines the validity of common assumptions regarding union membership attrition—or the gradual net loss in union members—by measuring changes in union membership in expanding and declining industries. The research summary also calculates the number of new members needed by union each year for either no change or a 1 percentage point increase in union density. The research finds that jobs in industries with large declines in employment are more often held by union members than jobs in industries with large employment increases. □

Communications regarding the *Monthly Labor Review* may be sent to:

Editor-in-Chief
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Washington, DC 20212
E-mail: mlr@bls.gov
Telephone: (202) 691-5900