

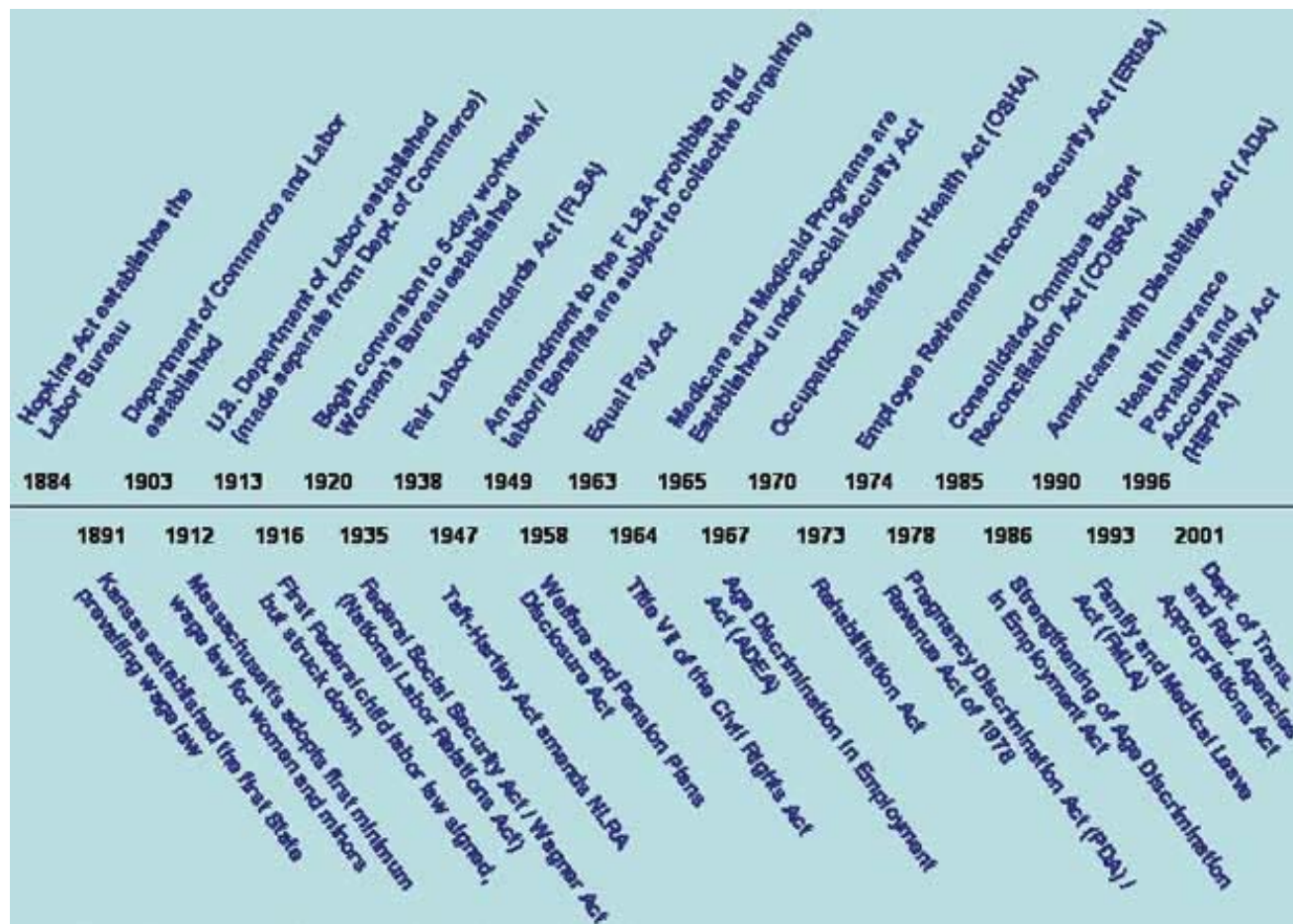


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Selected US Labor Laws and Regulations Timeline



Source: Definitions were adapted from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor (2001). *Overview of Report on the American Workforce 2001*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, with help from Barbara Cammarata, Lisa Gerson, and Travis Ribar of Georgetown University Law School.

1884

Hopkins Act establishes the Labor Bureau, the predecessor of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (incorporated into the Department of Commerce and Labor in 1903, and into the Department of Labor in 1913).

1891

Kansas establishes the first State prevailing wage law. The law states: "That not less than the current rate of per diem wages in the locality where the work is performed shall be paid to laborers ..." (Kan. Stat. Ch. 114, 1891).

1903

Department of Commerce and Labor is established by an act of Congress (15 U.S.C. §1501). The department extends the federal government's ability to control the interstate commerce actions of business and to monitor labor relations.

1912

Massachusetts adopts first minimum wage law for women and minors.

1913

U.S. Department of Labor is established by an act of Congress (29 U.S.C. §551) and made independent from the

Department of Commerce. It includes four preexisting bureaus of the old Department of Commerce and Labor: the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Immigration, the Bureau of Naturalization, and the Children's Bureau.

1916

First Federal child labor law, signed, but struck down. The law bans the sale of products from any factory, shop, or cannery that employs children under the age of 14, from any mine that employs children under the age of 16, and from any facility that has children under the age of 16 working at night or for more than 8 hours during the day. The Supreme Court rules that the act is unconstitutional because it oversteps the purpose of the government's powers to regulate interstate commerce.

1920

Begin conversion to 5-day workweek.

Women's Bureau established. As part of the Department of Labor, the Women's Bureau is formed to create standards and policies to promote better working conditions for women.

1935

Federal Social Security Act provides a nationwide system of social insurance to protect wage earners and their families, and to provide old-age benefits for workers, benefits for victims of industrial accidents, unemployment insurance, and aid for dependent mothers, children, and the physically handicapped.

Wagner Act (National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)) creates and defines the collective bargaining process between employers, unions and workers.

1938

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) establishes minimum wage, time and a half overtime pay, and recordkeeping requirements, and prohibits most employment of minors. The law originally contained a large number of special industry exemptions, many of which were designed to protect traditional pay practices in small, rural businesses. Many of these exemptions have been repealed, and the current focus of the law relates to the so-called "white collar" exemptions applicable to professional, administrative and executive employees.

1947

Taft-Hartley Act amends NLRA to revise requirements for unions in the collective bargaining process.

1949

An amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act directly prohibits child labor for the first time.

Courts decide that benefits are subject to collective bargaining.

1958

Welfare and Pension Plans Disclosure Act requires the administration of health insurance, pension, and supplementary unemployment compensation plans to file plan descriptions and, for plans with more than 100 participants, annual financial reports with the Secretary of Labor.

1963

Equal Pay Act prohibits wage differentials based on sex for workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, and prohibits lowering the wages of one sex in order to prevent raising pay for the other.

1964

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act establishes the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce Federal statutes prohibiting employment discrimination. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance.

1965

Medicare and Medicaid Programs are established under the Social Security Act to provide health care coverage primarily to the elderly, disabled and low-income populations.

1967

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) protects individuals 40 years of age or older, and makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of his/her age with respect to hiring, firing, promotion, compensation, benefits, job assignments, and training.

1970

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) is passed to ensure workplace safety. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration sets standards and conducts inspections to ensure safe and healthful workplaces.

1973

Rehabilitation Act is enacted to continue the federal vocational rehabilitation program for people with disabilities and to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability by federal agencies and recipients of federal funding.

1974

Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) sets minimum standards for most voluntarily established pension and health plans. It requires plans to provide participants with information about features and funding, and it places fiduciary responsibilities on those who manage and control plan assets.

1978

Pregnancy Discrimination Act is an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It requires employee benefit programs to treat pregnancy in the same way as illnesses, and makes it unlawful to discriminate based on pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions.

Revenue Act of 1978 permits employers to create 401(k) plans. The 401(k) allows a covered employee to elect to have a portion of his or her compensation (otherwise payable in cash) contributed to a qualified retirement plan; the employee is not taxed on that deferred compensation.

1985

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) requires employers that provide health care benefits to continue such benefits to formerly-covered individuals for a period of time after employer coverage ends.

1986

Strengthening of Age Discrimination in Employment Act eliminates the upper age limit of 70 years of age.

1990

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) establishes a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability. It covers physical disabilities affecting mobility, stamina, sight, hearing, and speech, as well as emotional illnesses and learning disorders. The ADA requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for the disabilities of employees unless undue hardship would result.

1993

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) mandates employers to grant an eligible employee up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for reasons related to birth/ adoption/ foster care of a child or the serious health condition of an employee or immediate family member.

1996

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) provides portability of health insurance and increased privacy protection for individual medical information.

2001

Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-346, §359) establishes a program for each executive agency to allow "eligible employees" to participate in a telework program to the maximum degree possible without affecting employee productivity.

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