

The January Review

January is the month when we typically publish updates on changes in State labor and unemployment insurance legislation, and our first issue for 2008 is no exception.

John J. Fitzpatrick, Jr., and James L. Perine from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment Standards Administration (ESA) provide a detailed and comprehensive overview of State labor legislation in 2007. Developments in more than 30 categories of labor-related legislation at the State level are routinely tracked by ESA, including those in such topical areas as agriculture, child labor, immigrant protections, prevailing and minimum wages, and worker privacy. The authors note that there was a larger volume of legislation in 2007 than in the previous year, and that 46 States enacted laws of consequence in one or more of the 30 categories.

Loryn Lancaster of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration reviews developments in unemployment insurance (UI) legislation among the various States in 2007. She pays particular emphasis to how some States last year enacted legislative changes or modified existing rules in response to the issuance in late 2006 of a Departmental rule governing the confidentiality and disclosure of State unemployment compensation information. She also describes new UI provisions designed to address fraud and nonfraud benefit overpayments, in addition to other legislative developments.

Also in this issue is a look at recent trends in workforce participation by older workers. Murray Gendell of Georgetown University examines labor force participation rates and patterns of employment for workers in various age cohorts starting at age 50. He finds that there have been noteworthy changes in recent years in historical patterns of workforce activity for both men and women in these age groups, and illuminates some of the changes in retirement and pension planning behavior that are influencing these trends.

BLS budget

As announced in this space last month, the availability of this publication in a print edition has temporarily been curtailed due to budget constraints. More information about the impacts of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Fiscal Year 2008 budget may be found at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/budgetimpact.htm>

CWC Online and The Editor's Desk

There are precedents for periodicals such as the MLR being published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics only in an online format. *Compensation and Working Conditions Online* (known more commonly as *CWC Online*) has just marked its fifth anniversary of monthly publication. Over this span, it has published about 100 pieces, including articles and table and chart presentations, on many aspects of occupational pay, employee benefits, workplace injuries and illnesses, major

work stoppages, and other subjects relating to the general world of employee compensation and workplace safety.

The current edition of *CWC Online* may be found at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/cwc/cm20080122ar01p1.htm>

As regular *MLR* readers may be aware, the Bureau also posts each business day an online feature called *Monthly Labor Review: The Editor's Desk* (or "*TED*," as it is commonly known.) The goal of *TED* is to publish timely information from around BLS in a concise, easy-to-digest format, usually in the form of a chart and a few paragraphs of text. Items selected for *TED* typically highlight intriguing data or trends published in fuller Bureau reports and analyses, to which links are provided. Print-edition compilations of the "best" of *TED* are available from BLS. (You can contact us at ted@bls.gov.) *The Editor's Desk* will be reaching an anniversary of its own later this year (its 10th birthday, in fact).

Cell phone expenditures

Data from the BLS Consumer Expenditure Survey show that spending by consumers on cellular telephones has risen rapidly in recent years. While that will not be a surprise, given the now-ubiquitous presence of these little devices throughout society, the fact that cell phone expenditures are now about equal to those of landline phone services has caught many people's attention. A brief analysis of this phenomenon posted on the Bureau's Web site—at <http://www.bls.gov/cex/cellphones.htm>—received quite a bit of media attention. □