
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 617
Author: Arreguín (D)
Amended: 8/27/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE LABOR, PUB. EMP. & RET. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 4/30/25
AYES: Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Cortese, Durazo, Laird

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

SENATE FLOOR: 36-0, 5/28/25
AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Choi, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
NO VOTE RECORDED: Cervantes, Dahle, Grove, Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0, 9/2/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: California Worker Adjustment and Retraining Act

SOURCE: Alameda County

DIGEST: This bill expands the information employers are required to include in a California Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (CalWARN) Act notice and requires employers that choose to coordinate services through a local workforce development board (LWDB) or another entity to do so within 30 days of the notice.

Assembly Amendments of 8/27/25 require employers, regardless of whether they plan to coordinate services with the LWDB or another entity, to include the LWDB's contact information, a description of the LWDB's services, and information on CalFresh benefits, in their CalWARN Act notices.

ANALYSIS:

Existing federal law enacts the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 in order to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with skilled workers. WIOA coordinates employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth through grants that are implemented at the state and local level. (29 United States Code §3101)

Existing state law:

- 1) Establishes the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), under the Labor Workforce and Development Agency, as the body responsible for assisting the Governor in the development, oversight, and continuous improvement of California's workforce system, including its alignment to the needs of the economy and the workforce. (Unemployment Insurance Code §14010 et seq.)
- 2) Establishes local workforce development boards (LWDBs) in each local workforce development area of the state to assist the local chief elected official in planning, oversight, and evaluation of local workforce investment. (Unemployment Insurance Code §14201)
- 3) Requires a LWDB to elect a chairperson for the local board among the business representatives. (Unemployment Insurance Code §14205)
- 4) Requires LWDBs to, among other things, do the following:
 - a) Convene local workforce development system stakeholders to develop and submit a local plan to the Governor that meets the requirements of WIOA.
 - b) Promote business representation, particularly representatives with optimal policymaking or hiring authority from employers whose employment opportunities reflect existing and emerging employment opportunities in the region, on the local board.
 - c) Develop effective linkages, including the use of intermediaries, with employers in the region to support employer utilization of the local workforce development system and to support local workforce investment activities.
 - d) Ensure that workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region, by enhancing communication,

- coordination, and collaboration among employers, economic development entities, and service providers.
- e) Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers. (Unemployment Insurance Code §14206)
- 5) Under the CalWARN Act, prohibits an employer with 75 or more full and part-time employees from ordering a mass layoff, relocation, or termination at a covered establishment, as defined, unless, 60 days before the order takes effect, the employer gives written notice to all of the following:
- a) The employees of the covered establishment affected by the order.
 - b) The Employment Development Department, the local workforce investment board, and the chief elected official of each city and county government within which the termination, relocation, or mass layoff occurs. (Labor Code §1400-1413)
- 6) Defines, for purposes of the CalWARN Act, an “employer” as any person, association, organization, partnership, business trust, limited liability company, or corporation who directly or indirectly owns and operates a covered establishment. A parent corporation is an employer as to any covered establishment directly owned and operated by its corporate subsidiary. (Labor Code §1400.5)
- 7) Exempts, from the provisions of CalWARN, seasonal employees and employees that are laid off as a result of the completion of a project in specified industries, where the employers are subject to specified wage orders, and the employees were hired with the understanding that their employment was seasonal and temporary. (Labor Code §1400.5.)
- 8) States that an employer that fails to give the required notice, as required by CalWARN, before ordering a mass layoff, relocation, or termination, is liable to each employee entitled to notice, for specified compensation and benefits, calculated for the period of the employer’s violation, up to a maximum of 60 days, or half the number of days that the employee was employed by the employer, whichever period is shorter. (Labor Code §1402)

This bill:

1) Requires an employer to include in a CalWARN Act notice whether the employer plans to coordinate services through the LWDB, through a different entity, or not at all.

2) Requires, regardless of whether an employer chooses to coordinate services through the LWDB or another entity, the employer to include in a CalWARN Act notice a functioning email and telephone number of the LWDB and the following description of the rapid response activities of the LWDB:

“Local Workforce Development Boards and their partners help laid off workers find new jobs. Visit an America’s Job Center of California location near you. You can get help with your resume, practice interviewing, search for jobs, and more. You can also learn about training programs to help start a new career.”

3) Requires, if an employer chooses to coordinate services with the LWDB or another entity, the employer to arrange services within 30 days from the date of the notice.

4) Requires an employer to include in a CalWARN Act notice a description of the statewide food assistance program CalFresh, the CalFresh benefits helpline, and a link to the CalFresh internet website.

5) Requires an employer to include in a CalWARN Act notice a functioning email and telephone number of the employer for contact.

Background

LWDBs. The workforce development system is comprised of 40 plus local workforce development areas, each with its own business-led LWDB. These boards work with their local chief elected official to oversee the delivery of workforce services to their local residents and businesses. Each LWDB has its own charter, organization, and unique local context. Members of private sector business, organized labor, community-based organizations, local government agencies, and local education agencies comprise an LWDB’s membership. LWDBs oversee One-Stop Career Centers. These Centers, through partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as education and economic development organizations, provide access to job, skill development, and business services. LWDBs perform the following roles in their communities:

- Convener - Bringing together business, labor, education, and economic development to focus on community workforce issues.
- Workforce Analyst - Developing, disseminating and understanding current labor market and economic information and trends.
- Broker - Bringing together systems to solve common problems, or brokering new relationships with businesses and workers.
- Community Voice - Advocating for the importance of workforce policy, providing perspective about the need for skilled workers.
- Capacity Builder - Enhancing the region's ability to meet the workforce needs of local employers.

Adults and displaced workers receive an initial assessment, job search and placement assistance, and career counseling at LWDBs. The dislocated worker program assists workers displaced by disasters, mass layoffs, or plant closures to regain economic security.

CalWARN Act Notices. The CalWARN Act protects employees, their families, and communities by requiring employers to give a 60-day notice to the affected employees and both state and local representatives before a mass layoff, relocation, or termination. Advance notice provides employees and their families time to transition and adjust to the potential loss of employment, time to seek alternative jobs and, if necessary, time to obtain skills training or retraining to successfully compete in the job market.

The federal WARN Act applies to employers with 100 or more full-time employees while the CalWARN Act applies to a “covered establishment” that employs 75 or more full and part-time employees. Under the CalWARN Act, notices are required for mass layoffs of 50 or more employees within a 30-day period, relocations of at least 100 miles affecting any amount of employees, and closures. For purposes of the WARN Act, “employee” is defined as a person employed by an employer for at least 6 months of the 12 months preceding the date on which notice is required. An employer is not required to provide notice if a mass layoff, relocation, or termination is necessitated by a physical calamity or act of war. Additionally an employer is not required to comply with the notice requirement if the employer was actively seeking capital or business, at the time the notice would have been required.

This bill. SB 617 would require employers to include in Cal/WARN Act notices whether they plan to coordinate services through the LWDB or another entity, a

functioning email and telephone number for the LWDB and for the employer, and information on CalFresh. If an employer chooses to coordinate with the LWDB or another entity, they would have 30 days from the date of the notice to arrange services.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 1356 (Haney, 2023, Vetoes) would have, among other things, revise the CalWARN Act to increase the notice requirement from 60 to 90 days prior to a mass layoff and modified the definition of “covered establishment.”

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- Minor and absorbable costs to the Department of Industrial Relations and Employment Development Department (EDD) to administer new notice requirements.
- Cost pressures of an unknown, but likely minor amount, to the courts in additional workload by expanding notice requirements under the WARN Act, as a person, including a local government or employee representative, may bring a civil action to establish liability against an employer that fails to give the required notice.

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/2/25)

Alameda County (Source)
California State Association of Counties
California Workforce Association
Jewish Vocational Service
Private Equity Stakeholder Project
Rural County Representatives of California
Urban Counties of California

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/2/25)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

The sponsors of the measure, Alameda County, state:

“Current law mandates that certain employers notify stakeholders of mass layoffs, including local workforce development boards (LWDBs), 60 days before the mass layoff via Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) letters. As proposed in SB 617, the existing WARN notification would be expanded to ensure that LWDBs are notified of an employer's plans to coordinate services with the LWDB and/or another entity, or not at all. This helps the LWDBs better anticipate and plan to offer services while also notifying impacted employees of the support services available to them...

SB 617 (Arreguin) directly supports these goals by promoting better coordination between employers and local workforce development boards, effectively bridging the gap between dislocated workers and the free resources designed to aid their career transitions.”

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9/3/25 18:38:15

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