



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0290, **Version:** 1

AN ORDINANCE relating to employment; ending the hazard pay requirement for additional compensation for grocery employees working in the unincorporated area of King County; and amending Ordinance 19247, Section 14.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Findings:

A. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared that coronavirus disease 2019 constituted a public health emergency of international concern, the highest level of alarm.

B. On February 29, 2020, Washington Governor Jay Inslee issued proclamation 20-05, proclaiming a state of emergency for all counties throughout the state of Washington in response to new cases of coronavirus disease 2019, and directing state agencies to use all resources necessary to prepare for and respond to the outbreak.

C. On March 1, 2020, King County executive Dow Constantine issued a proclamation of emergency enabling extraordinary measures to respond to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. On March 3, 2020, the council passed Motion 15610, affirming the proclamation of emergency.

D. On March 22, 2021, King County enacted Ordinance 19247 to protect and promote public peace, health and safety during the coronavirus disease 2019 emergency, by requiring grocery businesses located in unincorporated areas of King County to provide hazard pay for grocery employees, thereby compensating those employees for the hazards of working with significant exposure to an infectious disease and increasing retention of employees who provide essential services to local communities.

E. Ordinance 19247 stated the intention of the King County council to review the ordinance

approximately ninety days from the effective date of the ordinance, and stated that the council may repeal all or part the ordinance as and when the council finds that such a repeal is appropriate.

F. Three coronavirus disease 2019 vaccines have been authorized for emergency use by the United States Food and Drug Administration. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") states that the vaccines are safe and effective at preventing coronavirus 2019 disease and at reducing the risk of people spreading the virus to others.

G. In December 2020, the Washington state Department of Health published an estimated timeline for vaccine implementation. The initial vaccine timeline indicated that grocery employees would be eligible for vaccination in February 2021. A modified timeline, published in January 2021, clarified that only grocery employees fifty years old or older would be eligible in February 2021 and grocery employees under fifty years old would become eligible in April 2021. On March 17, 2021, the timeline was updated and grocery employees working in Washington state became eligible for vaccination. On April 15, 2021, all Washington residents sixteen years and older became eligible for vaccination. On May 12, 2021, all Washington residents twelve years and older became eligible for vaccination.

H. On June 30, 2021, Washington Governor Jay Inslee issued proclamation 20-25.14, named Washington Ready, which provided for a statewide reopening with a return to full capacity for most public spaces, including grocery businesses and retail stores.

I. As of July 28, 2021, public health - Seattle & King County states that nearly three million vaccine doses have been administered to residents of King County and that nearly eighty-two percent of residents age twelve and over have received at least one dose and more than seventy-six percent of residents age twelve and over have completed their vaccination series.

J. Public health - Seattle & King County notes continued disparities in vaccination rates, stating that, as of July 28, 2021, more than fifty-eight percent of Black eligible residents and fifty-nine percent of Latino eligible residents have completed their vaccination series.

K. Public health - Seattle & King County states that continued efforts to increase vaccinations are critical to closing vaccination disparities and has expressed commitment to ongoing work with community partners, including employers, local jurisdictions, school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based congregations and labor organizations to close the gap in vaccine rates.

L. The King County council recognizes that continuing vaccination efforts and the protection provided by vaccination from severe health impacts resulting from coronavirus disease 2019 demonstrates considerable progress toward supporting the health and safety of essential workers and community members.

SECTION 2. Ordinance 19247, Section 14, is hereby amended to read as follows:

~~((This ~~o~~))~~ Ordinance 19247, Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 expire~~((s on the~~
~~termination of the executive's March 1, 2020, proclamation of emergency in accordance with the provisions in~~
~~the proclamation))~~ on _____, 2021. Ordinance 19247, Section 7, expires September 30, 2024.