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Minnesota Governor Vetoes Uniform Labor Standards Bill

As expected, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton has vetoed legislation passed by the Minnesota legislature that would have preempted local governments ability to enact laws that set wage, vacation, or sick time requirements, or other employment benefit levels higher than those set by state-wide law. The vetoed legislation (the Uniform Labor Standards bill) was passed by the Minnesota state legislature late last month and was perceived, to a great degree, as a response to the enactment of Minneapolis and St. Paul city ordinances creating mandatory sick leave benefits for employees. Although it is difficult to predict with certainty, at this time a possible override of Governor Dayton's veto appears unlikely.

Governor Dayton's veto of this bill comes amidst broader drama in the Minnesota state government, with the state legislature and the governor at battle over major budget bills. The Uniform Labor Standards bill had earlier been added by the state legislature into a broad budget bill. Deep into the 2017 legislative session, however, Republican leadership of the legislature (the Republicans currently control both legislative houses in Minnesota) and Governor Dayton (a Democrat) agreed to strip the provision pertaining to employment standards out of the budget bill. The legislation was then passed by the state legislature, mostly on party lines, as a stand-alone bill, which was then vetoed by Governor Dayton less than a week later.

The net effect of the governors veto is that the sick leave ordinances enacted by Minneapolis and St. Paul will go into effect as scheduled on July 1, 2017. We have previously blogged about the substance of those ordinances and the timing for compliance. As mentioned in our previous post, there is a pending lawsuit challenging the Minneapolis sick pay ordinance and, as that suit progresses, we will post updates on any significant developments.