

# NEWS

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Dec. 12, 2023

For Immediate Release

## **San Mateo County Supervisors Move to Create Office on Labor Laws, Minimum Wage Enforcement**

**Redwood City** – The Board of Supervisors today voted 5-0 to [launch a new office](#) to educate workers and businesses about minimum wage requirements and labor protections and, in the future, to enforce local labor laws.

The new entity will be called the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement, a countywide clearinghouse for accurate and up-to-date information on laws that affect low-wage workers.

“The county’s economic health depends on industries that tend to pay low wages, including the food service industry, personal care and service industries, janitorial maintenance and healthcare support operations,” said Dave Pine, president of the Board of Supervisors. “Having an in-house Office of Labor Standards Enforcement will allow the County to strengthen worker protections, especially for our most vulnerable and at-risk workers.”

The resolution was jointly introduced by President Pine and Supervisor Ray Mueller. “The creation of the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement is a significant step forward in San Mateo County, ensuring that small-business owners have the up-to-date information and resources they need to stay in compliance with shifting state and local regulatory laws,” Mueller said. “At the same time, this office will be supplying workers with a crucial partner in protecting their rights and ensuring that the most vulnerable amongst us are not exploited.”

In approving the resolution, the Board vowed that, “Specific attention would be paid to low-income workers, workers from vulnerable populations such as women, people of color, immigrants, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, refugees and individuals with disabilities.”

During today's Board meeting, Mueller said he anticipates the County will establish an advice line for workers and businesses seeking information or assistance with labor standards compliance or workplace issues.

Education for workers and employers is particularly important given 11 of 20 cities in [San Mateo County have their own locally established minimum wage laws](#).

In addition, the Board has set a minimum wage of \$16.50 an hour ([rising to \\$17.06 an hour](#) on Jan. 1, 2024) in the unincorporated areas. Separate wage laws affect workers at San Francisco International Airport. The [state's minimum wage](#) applies in cities without a locally established minimum wage.

Today's vote calls for the County Executive's Office to return with recommendations on the specific powers and structure of the new office, including options for enforcement. The new office is expected to be up and running by July 1, 2024, with an initial focus on education.

Supervisors appointed a subcommittee of Pine and Mueller to continue to work on details of establishing the office.

Underpayment for low-wage workers has long been a vexing issue. Failing to pay the minimum wage and overtime, requiring employees to work off-the-clock, refusing workers mealtimes and breaks and other violations cost California's minimum-wage workers nearly \$2 billion annually.

[A study by the Economic Policy Institute](#), a nonprofit research group based in Washington, D.C., found that violations of minimum wage laws alone "exceeds the value of property crimes committed in the United States each year." (This includes the total value of all robberies, burglaries, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.)

Outreach and educational materials provided by the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement for both workers and employers will be in a variety of languages.

"I'm so incredibly excited about the establishment of a San Mateo County Office of Labor Standards Enforcement," said Julie Lind, executive secretary of the [San Mateo County Central Labor Council](#). "This is something we in the labor community have been advocating for since 2014. We are grateful to President Pine and Supervisor Mueller for making our passion project their own, and to the rest of the Board for their support. This labor of love will be an incredible resource for our community, and it is one that can't come soon enough."

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COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

