Parental Leave Mandate Hurts Small Business

One of the things keeping state legislators busy in Sacramento right now is a shortsighted attempt to impose on California small businesses a new, one-size-fits-all mandated leave program that threatens their ability to stay in business.

SB 63 would impose a new unmanageable mandate on small business. The bill would dictate another leave program over and above the existing pregnancy disability leave for new parents.

Small-business owners want to be sensitive to the needs of new parents. But with limited resources and limited flexibility in managing their workforce, the best way for employers to meet the needs of new parents beyond what is already required in statute for pregnancy disability leave is to work out a mutually agreeable solution. This proposal is unworkable because there is no flexibility.

The cookie-cutter approach required under SB 63 would not adequately take into account the fact that in order to be profitable, a business must be responsive to its clients. The situation SB 63 would create could make this impossible. Very troubling is the fact that the proposal would allow employees to sue their boss if the employer could not grant leave on the employee’s terms. SB 63 would put the employer in an untenable position of choosing between the threat of litigation by trial lawyers or meeting their customers’ needs.

Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed a measure that was nearly identical to SB 63, saying, “I am concerned, however, about the impact of this leave particularly on small businesses and the potential liability that could result.” Yet the bill was reintroduced again this year without any sensitivity to either the governor’s or small businesses’ concerns. The threat of litigation under this proposal is significant. Any claim that the employer denied, interfered with, discouraged, retaliated or attempted to do any of these actions with regard to the employee’s 12-week leave could expose the employer to compensatory damages, injunctive relief, declaratory relief, punitive damages and attorney’s fees. A 2015 study by insurance provider Hiscox regarding the cost of comparative employee lawsuits estimated that the cost for a small employer to defend and settle a single plaintiff claim was approximately $125,000. This amount is without regard to the merit of the claim and could easily put a small employer completely out of business.

The size of the employer to whom SB 63’s mandate would apply also contributes to the bill’s overreach.

.....continued on page 6 ➤
THE EL CENTRO CHAMBER FOUNDATION INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

Imperial Valley Girls ROCK!

AWARDS CEREMONY & SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2017
5:30 - 7:30 PM
IMPERIAL PALMS RESORT

$40 PER PERSON / $300 TABLE OF 8
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL ANTHONY
AT (760) 352-3681 OR EMAIL ANTHONY@ELCENTROCHAMBER.COM
I have been a good year for the Chamber, it is hard to believe that it is already time to pass the gavel once again. I want to say that it has been wonderful to have had Mayor Cardenas and Mayor Pro Tem Vieges/Walker attend our board meetings and provide updates from the City as well as Supervisor Mike Kelley and Supervisor Luis Plancarte for the updates from the County.

We have 46 new members this year and we have had 9 ribbon cuttings and presented 6 Star Awards for superior customer service over this past fiscal year.

Two years during my presidency we established the El Centro Chamber Foundation. It is a non-profit affiliate of the El Centro Area Chamber whose mission is to support and advance the educational, cultural and economic interest of Imperial County. I’m very pleased to say that this first year the Foundation was able to give out 16 $250 Scholarships for a total of $4,000. These scholarships were given to graduating seniors and enrolled college students from throughout the entire Imperial Valley. The primary source of funding for the foundation this year was the Imperial Valley Girls Rock Program which will be held again in September.

I would like to thank all of the El Centro Chamber Board and the Executive Board for all of their hard work and support this past year to help keep the Chamber going.

I would like to recognize Terri Rogers for her outstanding job of leading our special events committee. Through Terri’s efforts as well as all the committee members the Air Show Gala Fashion Show & Ladies Night, Christmas Parade and the Air Show Gala continues to grow into bigger and nicer events every year.

I would like to thank Jennifer McGrew/Thomason and Victor Nava for their outstanding job of leading Membership and Ambassadors for the Chamber. Both of which have grown this past year.

Through the work of our Ag Committee which was led by Veronica Wright we were able to have a poster contest for what we hope will be a billboard located along Interstate 8 welcoming everyone to the Imperial Valley. With the importance of agriculture being the theme of the billboard. A big thanks to Veronica and everyone on her committee to help get this going.

I’m happy to say that I will continue to represent the El Centro Chamber on the Mexicali/Baja partnership that we have established here at the El Centro Area Chamber. I will also be El Centro’s representative on the Imperial Valley Joint Chambers.

I want to thank David Tyler, for all of his work on the board over the years and for all of his work and input this past year as past president.

I want to thank all of you members for your continued support to the El Centro Area Chamber for without you members we would not have a Chamber.

It has been a real privilege to work with the entire Chamber staff and I appreciate all the support they have provided.

It has been and honor and privilege to serve as President of the El Centro Chamber of Commerce not only once but twice. I look forward to continuing my involvement with the Chamber as we go forward.

I look forward to working with our incoming President Jeff Strudevant.

Thank-you,

Les Smith
Opposition Stops 4 Job Killers; 6 Move to Second House

Six job killer bills moved from one legislative house to the other in time to meet last week’s June 2 deadline for bills to pass the house in which they were introduced while three job killer bills were stopped.

A fourth job killer was held by a fiscal committee the previous week.

Job Killers Stopped

Strong opposition from the California Chamber of Commerce and the business community helped to stop SB 705 (Allen; D-Santa Monica) from reaching the Assembly. SB 705 would have prohibited food vendors from using take-out food containers made from polystyrene foam as of January 1, 2020. The bill was refused passage on May 31 on a vote of 15-19, then granted reconsideration. Senator Ben Allen placed SB 705 on the Senate Inactive File, where it will remain and will be eligible for consideration in 2018.

Also stopped on the Senate Floor was SB 567 (Lara; D-Bell Gardens), which proposed multiple tax hikes on state employers. The bill targeted family-owned businesses that transfer the business upon death to other family members. SB 567 also sought to eliminate the current deduction allowed for compensation paid to executive officers for achieving performance-based goals. Senator Ricardo Lara moved the bill to the Senate Inactive File and it may be considered in 2018.

AB 1576 (Levine; D-San Rafael) was never brought up for a vote on the Assembly Floor. The bill proposed to significantly amend the Gender Tax Repeal Act of 1998 so that businesses could easily have been sued for a consumer’s assertion that there was a price difference for substantially similar goods due to the gender of the intended user. The bill would have required businesses to settle consumer complaints with a minimum of $4,000 in damages or face further costly litigation.

The previous week, AB 43 (Thurmond; D-Richmond), which would have imposed a targeted tax on contractors for the privilege of doing business with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, was held on the Assembly Appropriations Committee Suspense File on May 26. AB 43 also requires the contractor to absorb the cost while maintaining a price of lowest responsible bidder. The bill will not be moving any more this year, but will be eligible for consideration next year.

Job Killers in Second House

Moving on to the second house are the following CalChamber-opposed job killer bills:

Arbitration Discrimination

• SB 33 (Dodd; D-Napa) Discrimination Against Arbitration Agreements: Unfairly discriminates against arbitration agreements contained in consumer contracts for goods or services with a financial institution, as broadly defined, which is likely preempted by the Federal Arbitration Act and will lead to confusion and unnecessary litigation. To Assembly.

• SB 538 (Monning; D-Carmel) Arbitration Discrimination: Unfairly and unlawfully discriminates against arbitration agreements by restricting the formation of antitrust arbitration agreements in hospital contracts, leading to costly litigation over preemption by the Federal Arbitration Act. To Assembly

Increased Labor Costs

• AB 1209 (Gonzalez Fletcher; D-San Diego) Public Shaming of California Employers: Imposes a mandate on California employers to collect data on the mean and median salaries paid to men and women under the same job title or description without also considering any bona fide reason for differences in compensation, to publicly shame California employers and expose them to costly litigation for alleged wage disparity where no violation of the equal pay law exists. To Senate.

• SB 63 (Jackson; D-Santa Barbara) Imposes New Maternity and Paternity Leave Mandate: Unduly burdens and increases costs of small employers with as few as 20 employees by requiring 12 weeks of protected employee leave for child bonding and exposes them to the threat of costly litigation. To Assembly.

• SB 562 (Lara; D-Bell Gardens) Government-Run Health Care: Creates a new single-payer government-run, multibillion-dollar health care system financed by an unspecified and undeveloped “revenue plan” which will penalize responsible employers and individuals and result in significant new taxes on all Californians and California businesses. To Assembly.

Increased Unnecessary Litigation Costs

• SB 49 (de León; D-Los Angeles) Creates Uncertainty and Increases Potential Litigation Regarding Environmental Standards: Creates uncertainty for businesses with respect to the federal environmental standards proposed to be incorporated into California law if backsliding occurs at the federal level and the standards/requirements to be adopted by state agencies, and increases the potential for costly litigation by creating private rights of action under California law when certain events occur. To Assembly.

To see the full list of job killer bills identified this year, visit www.calchamber.com/jobkillers.
THANK YOU for your donations & contributions to the success of the El Centro Area Chamber 111th Annual Dinner Meeting & Silent Auction!

2016-17 PRESIDENTS CIRCLE
Platinum: SDG&E, Platinum Media Partner: Imperial Valley Press Gold: Paradise/Quechan Casinos, Rabobank Gold Media Partner: The Desert Review
Silver: Alford Distributing, City of El Centro, Wal-Mart Supercenter
Bronze: Burgers & Beer, CR&R Incorporated, Community Valley Bank, First Imperial Credit Union, Hutchinson and Bloodgood LLP, Imperial Printers, Imperial Valley Family Care Medical Group APC, Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District, Rogers & Rogers Auto Group, Skyline Security, Spectrum Creative Services Swain & Kennerson an Accountancy Corp., Tyler Insurance Agency, United States Gypsum.

Silent Auction Donors: Ametza, Mrs. Anna Terrazas, El Centro Chamber Foundation, Desert Trails RV Park & Golf Course, Heart & Hand Assisted Living, Hutchinson & Bloodgood LLP, KXO Radio, PeopleReady, Toward Maximum Independence, Valley Vision Care.
The practical reality of how the policy would need to be implemented makes the measure particularly onerous. While the bill purports to only apply to businesses with 20-50 employees within a 75-mile radius, it does not take into account the impact on individual locations. Consider a scenario where a businesses’ individual location employs five people and three are out on mandated protected leave programs. The inflexibility of the bill means there is no opportunity to work out a mutually agreeable arrangement for the leave to make sure both the needs of the employee and employer are met. Most small businesses do not have a dedicated human resource officer who can monitor and juggle all the various leave programs available to employees nor can small businesses absorb workload with numerous employees in one location out on simultaneous leaves. This proposal ignores the limited resources of a small business.

Proponents often emphasize the idea that SB 63 wouldn’t “cost” employers anything because it deals with “unpaid leave.” What they forget to mention is that small businesses or companies who deal with very specialized products or services cannot simply hire a temp to do the job necessary to stay profitable. Also, under the proposal, employers are required to continue to maintain and pay for the absent employee’s health coverage during his or her leave. Additionally, the employer must either pay other employees overtime to cover the duties of the individual on leave or hire a temp, if possible, at a premium price to cover during the absence.

California is already recognized by the National Conference of State Legislatures as one of the most family-friendly states given its list of programs and protected leaves of absence, including paid sick days, school activities leave, kin care, paid family leave program and pregnancy disability leave — all of which apply to small business. This list is in addition to the leaves of absence required at the federal level.

Leave policies like the one proposed in SB 63 can overtake and strain small-business employers who, ironically, are needed by families to provide the jobs, paychecks and benefits that will allow them to support their families in the future.

Jennifer Barrera is senior policy advocate for CalChamber.
CEO Willis, Victor Platero- Ambassador of the year, Betty Tucker- 4th qtr, Diana Inman-Moreno- 3rd qtr, Mike Castro-1st qtr, and Victor Nava

Oreda Chin and Erasmo Gonzalez

2017 President Circle Awards

2017 Annual Dinner Guests

President’s Circle

2016-2017

Platinum
Imperial Valley Press
San Diego Gas & Electric

GOLD
The Desert Review
Quechan/Paradise Casino
Rabobank

SILVER
Alford Distributing
City of El Centro
Walmart Supercenter

BRONZE
Burgers & Beers
CR&R Incorporated
Community Valley Bank (CVB)
First Imperial Credit Union
Hutchinson & Bloodgood
Imperial Printers
Imperial Valley Family Care Medical Group
Pioneers Memorial Healthcare District
Rogers & Rogers Auto Group
Skyline Securities
Spectrum Creative Advertising
Swain & Kennerson an Accountancy Corp.
Tyler Insurance Agency
United States Gypsum
Thank you to all that have renewed their membership in April, May and June!

Jordan/Central Implement Co.
Ball Appraisal Service
Burgers & Beer - Imperial Valley Mall
Walmart Supercenter
Allstate Ins. Co. Dickey Insurance Services Inc.
Jim Reiter's Locksmith & Safe Inc.
ACME Staffing
Ametza, LLC
Beyond Borders Gazette
Castillo Construction Co.
DEF Products, LLC
Discovery Land Preschool
First Christian Church
Hunter Employment Services
Imperial Valley Cancer Support Center
Lucky Chinese Restaurant
Quality Inn
Desert Trails RV Park & Golf Course
Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites
Imperial County Farm Bureau
National Property Inspections
Boys & Girls Clubs of Imperial Valley
Imperial County Association of REALTORS®
International Farm Services, LLC
Allstar Seed Company
Rio Bend RV & Golf Resort
American Cancer Society
Mitosinka, Barros & Sharp, An Accountancy Corp.
A & A Cottage View Assisted Living

I V Termite & Pest Control Inc.
Westar Seeds International Inc.
Billings, Patricia, DDS, MPH
Burrtec Waste Industries
Imperial County Work Training Center, Inc.
Mende's Groom Room
Watson, Tom Electrical Inc.
Yady's Jewelry & Gifts
Comfort Inn & Suites
Derma's Floor Covering
Carlos Neon Signs
Golden Acorn Casino & Travel Center
McNeece Brothers Oil Co., Inc.
Belellano Insurance Services
Guild Mortgage Company
Cynthia's Flower Connection
Terminix of Imperial Valley
New York Life Insurance Co.
Sure Helpline Center
Baja Duty Free
Central Union High School District
K & M Press, Inc.
SA Recycling
Spread the Love Charity
Wallick & Volk
El Centro Regional Medical Center
Imperial Premix, LLC
Servpro of El Centro/Salton Sea
**News & Events**

**June 26-July 19**

**Beginning Violin Class For Kids (Mondays & Wednesdays)** - This fun course is open to all children, ages 6 through 12, who wish to learn to play violin, no prior knowledge of music is needed. Students will learn proper techniques of playing the violin, beautiful tone production, articulation and will be exposed to a variety of delightful repertoire. The course will be group-styled and conclude with a concert presentation. Course takes place at El Centro College from 8:00 am-9:30 am. The fee is $60 (textbook included). For more information contact Vicky Figueroa (760)355-6003.

**Beginning Orchestral Stringed Instruments (Violin, Viola, Cello) (Mondays & Wednesdays)** - This course is open to all community members, ages 13 years and older. No prior knowledge of music is needed. It will be the student’s choice as to which instrument they wish to study. Students will learn proper music techniques, beautiful tone production, articulation, and will be exposed to a variety of fun, level-appropriate, musical repertoire. This course will be group-styled and conclude with a concert presentation. Course takes place at Imperial Valley College from 5:30 pm-7:30 pm. The cost is $60 (textbook included)! For more information contact Vicky Figueroa (760)355-6303.

**July 4**

**Freedom Fest 2017** - Join the Imperial Valley Chamber of Commerce, KXO Radio, Imperial Valley College, and other agencies for the 2017 Freedom Fest. The concessions begin at 6 PM. The fireworks begin at 9:30 PM. The community is welcome to attend the largest single day event in the Imperial Valley.

**July 19**

**California Competes Tax Credit Presentation** - Did you know the state of California is offering over $200 million in tax credits this year to business owners who do not have the adequate space or time to plan the event? We have the solution! Sign up to take part in our Annual Co-op Mixer on August 17th. The Annual Co-op Mixer is held in August of every year and provides an opportunity for chamber members who do not have the adequate space to host a mixer, to exhibit their business and display their products and services. Festivities include: business card & prize drawings, appetizers & refreshments, booth exhibits, networking and much more. For more information on participation and booth space contact Anthony Moreno at (760) 352-3681. This year’s Summer Bash Mixer to take place at Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites located at 350 Smoketree Br., El Centro from 5-7 pm.

**July 21**

**Paint and Whine 6 1/2** - Reserve your spot before time and seats run out! All proceeds benefit the Imperial Valley Cancer Support Center. Takes place at Hidalgo Hall 410 S. Cesar Chavez, Brawley, CA from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is $30 adults/$15 kids; includes wine (or soft drink) ticket, Appetizer and more fun than you can handle in one night! Contact Sara at the Imperial Valley Cancer Support Center office (760) 351-1774 or via email sara@betweenwomen.org.

**July 22**

**Community Clean Up** - Community Clean-up Event What items may you take to the drop off location? Furniture: Sofa beds, couches, tables, chairs, mattresses, box springs, patio furniture, etc. NO COMMERCIAL TYPE LOADS. Yard waste: grass clippings, tree trimmings & branches. Large Appliances: Washing machines, dryers, refrigerators, stoves, water heaters, etc. E-Waste: Televisions, computers/laptops, microwaves, printers, copiers, fax machines. This event is provided for El Centro residential customers only, you must show proof of residency (driving license & water bill). No businesses and no commercial dumping. Free collection of Automobile Tires. Please Note: You may dispose of no more than nine (9) tires without a transportation waiver from Environmental Health. Passenger, light duty truck tires and rims accepted. Location 599 E Main St., El Centro, CA. From 8 AM–12 PM. For more information contact (877) 482-5656.

**August 17**

**Summer Bash Mixer** – Are you an El Centro Chamber member who would like to host a mixer but don’t have adequate space or time to plan the event? We have the solution! Sign up to take part in our Annual Co-op Mixer on August 17th. The Annual Co-op Mixer is held in August of every year and provides an opportunity for chamber members who do not have the adequate space to host a mixer, to exhibit their business and display their products and services. festivities include: business card & prize drawings, appetizers & refreshments, booth exhibits, networking and much more. For more information on participation and booth space contact Anthony Moreno at (760) 352-3681.

**SEPTMBER 7**

**Imperial Valley Girls Rock!** - Do you know an Imperial Valley Girl who ROCKS!? - Nominate her to be recognized by the El Centro Chamber Foundation at the annual Imperial Valley Girls ROCK! Awards Dinner & Fundraiser on Thursday, September 7. Nominees are those who strive toward the highest levels of personal and professional accomplishments, devote time and energy to their community in a meaningful way and serve as a role model for others. Sponsorship Opportunities Available. The El Centro Chamber Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contribution will ensure the El Centro Chamber Foundation is able to support, and advance the educational, social and economic interest of the Imperial Valley. For more information contact Anthony at (760) 352-3681 or email anthony@elcentrochamber.com.

**July 28**

**MVP All Star Luncheon** - Are you a cancer patient? Caregiver, Family Member, or Friend of a Cancer Patient? You’re invited to our male only luncheon. Wear your favorite Sports Jersey, Shirt or Hat. GAMES / FOOD / PRIZES / GUEST SPEAKER. Space is limited. Event takes place at Pioneers Memorial Auditorium, 207 W. Legion Road, Brawley, CA from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. For more information contact Sara at 760-351-1774.

**SEPTEMBER 7**

**Imperial Valley Girls Rock!** - Do you know an Imperial Valley Girl who ROCKS!? - Nominate her to be recognized by the El Centro Chamber Foundation at the annual Imperial Valley Girls ROCK! Awards Dinner & Fundraiser on Thursday, September 7. Nominees are those who strive toward the highest levels of personal and professional accomplishments, devote time and energy to their community in a meaningful way and serve as a role model for others. Sponsorship Opportunities Available. The El Centro Chamber Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contribution will ensure the El Centro Chamber Foundation is able to support, and advance the educational, social and economic interest of the Imperial Valley. For more information contact Anthony at (760) 352-3681 or email anthony@elcentrochamber.com.

**July 19**

**El Centro Chamber Mixer** - El Centro Chamber’s July Mixer will be held Thursday, July 21 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. All El Centro Chamber members are encouraged to attend.
Welcome New Members

**Healthcare Services/Hospitals**
Imperial Physical Therapy
Farid Zia
1698 Cruickshank Drive, Ste. A
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 353-3422
www.iptclinic.com

**Medical Billing & Practice Management**
Southern California Physicians Services
343 S. 8th Street Ste. B
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 619-425-2737
www.scmdservices.com

**Attorneys & Related Services**
Bornt & Sons Inc.
Miryam Rosetti
2307 E. Highway 98
Holtville, CA 92250
(760) 356-5920

**Motels & Hotels**
Comfort Inn & Suites
Sam Singh
2354 S. 4th Street
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 335-3505
www.choicehotels.com

**Educational Services/Training**
University of Phoenix
Anthony Ellis
9645 Granite Ridge Drive
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 650-4603

**Water Treatment/Sales & Services**
Hague Quality Water Solutions of Imperial Valley
Norma Leep
2435 Marshall Avenue, Ste. A
Imperial, CA 92251
(760) 353-9003
www.imperial.haguewater.com

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Costco Ribbon Cutting

Costco’s 25th Anniversary Celebration