



Feb 4, 2021

## “Hero Pay” Ordinances Are Making a Wave Through Southern California

Topics: [Wage & Hour Issues](#)

By: [Carolina A. Schwalbach](#)

Cities throughout Southern California, including Long Beach, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles, have been contemplating ordinances requiring “Hero Pay” for certain essential workers for some time. Last week, the City of Long Beach became the first California city to pass a “Hero Pay” ordinance, which requires certain grocery business to pay a premium of \$4 per hour to its hourly employees. The ordinance applies to grocery stores that have both (a) more than 300 grocery workers nationally and (b) more than 15 employees per grocery store within the City of Long Beach. The four dollar an hour premium will remain in place for at least 120 days.

The Long Beach ordinance has been in place for less than a week and has already garnered a tumultuous response, including a lawsuit by the California Grocers Association asking that the ordinance be declared unconstitutional, and national grocery stores announcing their intent to close some of their stores in the City of Long Beach.

The City of Los Angeles is not far behind. Earlier this week, on February 2, 2021, the Los Angeles City Council voted to move forward with an ordinance that would require certain grocery and drug stores to pay employees a premium of \$5 per hour, for 120 days. The ordinance has now moved into the drafting stages so that it can be submitted to a final vote. Covered employers should keep a close eye on the development of this ordinance, which is likely to be adopted in the next few weeks. Almost certainly, this ordinance will be followed by additional lawsuits and store closures, as well as the consideration and adoption of similar ordinances in neighboring municipalities. These types of “Hero Pay” ordinances are not limited to Southern California. The Oakland City Council is also moving forward with its “Hero Pay” ordinance and San Jose is debating enacting one as well.

“Hero Pay” ordinances are just one of many types of local ordinances governing employment in cities throughout the state. For a comprehensive look at the plethora of local employment ordinances in California and how they mesh with state and federal laws, we encourage you to register to attend our next webinar: California’s Patchwork of Local Employment Ordinances – a Minefield for the Unwary. You can learn more and register by clicking [here](#).