

# ALERT

## Just-Signed Bills Offer Relief from Pandemic Hardship

### *More Funds for Small Business Grant Program*



### SUPPORT

Governor Gavin Newsom signed legislation this week to provide relief to Californians experiencing pandemic hardship.

Included in the package were bills to

allocate another \$2.1 billion to the small business grant program and waive license renewal fees for businesses in industries hit hard by the COVID-19 shutdowns.

The bills went into effect immediately upon being signed on February 23.

The California Chamber of Commerce applauded the Governor for taking action that offers some much-needed economic relief for California's small businesses.

"Small businesses in the state are reeling from the economic fallout of

COVID-19 shutdowns and the financial bridge provided through the fee waivers and grants approved today by Governor Newsom will provide help and hope as we wait for California's economy to recover," the CalChamber said in a statement issued after the bill signings.

"While the Governor's action today is an important step forward, our small businesses still need tax and regulatory relief," the CalChamber continued. "The Legislature should act swiftly to pass AB 80, which offers preferable tax treatment for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, and they should reject any proposal that adds to the cost of doing business in the state."

### Small Business Relief

CalChamber-supported **SB 87 (Caballero; D-Salinas)** adds \$2.1 billion to the \$500 million program providing

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## California Releases Employer COVID-19 Compliance Portal



As the COVID-19 pandemic approaches the one-year mark, federal, state and local governments

have spent the last year continually developing new laws, regulations, ordinances, orders, and countless "guidance" documents and updates. It's difficult, if not overwhelming at times, for employers to track the sheer number of resources.

To assist employers, the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency and the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) have consolidated resources for employers on a [new website, https://saferatwork.covid19.ca.gov/employers/](https://saferatwork.covid19.ca.gov/employers/).

The website doesn't contain new guidance, meaning it doesn't have new information that employers have to learn; instead, all the information is consolidated from existing agency guidance to create one central hub for employers to find all the rules and guidance applicable to them.

### Resources

The website contains, for example, information and resources employers can use to make their workplaces safer, including:

- Training resources;

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## Promoting Equality, Diversity and Opportunity in The Workplace

See new webinar at [calchamber.com/diversity](https://calchamber.com/diversity).



## Labor Law Corner

# Employee Quitting Due to COVID May Still Collect Unemployment



**Ellen S. Savage**  
HR Adviser

*I have several employees who have quit for COVID-19 related reasons, including lack of child care and fear of being in the workplace. Why are they able to collect unemployment insurance when they were the ones who chose to quit?*

An employee who quits with good cause is eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) in California. According to the California Code of Regulations,

good cause exists when the “motivating factor... is real, substantial, and compelling and would cause a reasonable person genuinely desirous of retaining employment to leave work under the same circumstances.” (22 CCR 1256-3(b))

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, some common reasons for quitting with good cause included taking a substantially better job, having to move away when a spouse’s job was relocated, or an employer who was not responsive to concerns regarding harassment or abuse occurring in the workplace.

Over the last year, it has become more common for employees to quit for COVID-19-related reasons, such as lack of child care availability and workplace health and safety concerns.

### State Explanation

Whether those reasons for quitting constitute good cause will depend on a number of factors. California’s Employment Development Department (EDD) provides an explanation of these factors in its Benefit Determination Guide, Voluntary Quit volume, available online at <https://edd.ca.gov/uibdgl>.

### Lack of Child Care

An employee who quits due to lack of child care must show EDD that they were “left with no practical alternative to quitting.” According to EDD, “arranging care with neighbors, relatives, friends, a nursery school, or day care service are considered practical alternatives to quitting. Therefore, faced with loss of exist-

ing child care, a claimant would generally be expected to explore all of these alternatives prior to quitting.”

Given the unique circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, with widespread shutdown of schools and day care facilities, and relatives and friends limiting their exposure to other people, many employees who have young children are able to convince EDD that they had no practical alternative to quitting their job.

### Safety Concerns

An employee who quits because they don’t feel safe returning to the workplace might be able to show good cause in two circumstances.

According to EDD, an employee could have good cause to quit if their employer did not follow industry guidance for safely reopening, as long as the employee first brought their concerns to the employer and allowed the employer an opportunity to fix the situation if they could reasonably do so.

Good cause also could be found if the employee feels unsafe returning to the workplace because they are at greater personal risk for COVID-19 due to their age or serious chronic health conditions.

*Column based on questions asked by callers on the Labor Law Helpline, a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred and executive members. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at [www.hrcalifornia.com](http://www.hrcalifornia.com).*

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*The Workplace*

# Federal Labor Law Changes to Expect



In [Episode 106](#) of The Workplace podcast, CalChamber Executive Vice President and General Counsel Erika Frank,

Policy Advocate Ashley Hoffman, and Legislative Advocate Chris Micheli of Aprea & Micheli discuss what federal employment law changes employers can expect to occur this year.

## New President, New Agenda

This year kicked off the start of President Joseph Biden's administration, and as can be expected whenever a new president is sworn in, there has been a changing of the guard in many government agencies, Frank tells podcast listeners. New leadership is being put into place, with new agendas that the new president wants to pursue. As always, labor and employment is a hot topic.

Former President Donald Trump's administration did quite a lot in the labor and employment area, and as is expected whenever a president from the opposing political party comes into office, President Biden jumped right into things. Hours after being sworn in, he appointed new leadership to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), elevating one of the Democratic board members to chair, Micheli explains. President Biden

also has revoked a number of President Trump's executive orders and placed holds on certain regulatory actions.

Frank recalls that during former President Barack Obama's administration, the NLRB was very active in regulating the use of social media by employees, giving ample latitude on what constitutes workplace speech. Are there any particular issues the agency is looking at this year, Frank asks Hoffman.

## Targeted Issues

There is speculation that President Biden will be making it easier for every American to unionize, and to be able to organize in small groups, Hoffman answers. There also is speculation that the NLRB will be putting forth orders that allow workers to use employer resources for communications.

Micheli adds that one of President Trump's goals while in office was to overrule a lot of the NLRB decisions made under the Obama administration. So, Micheli says, it can be expected that the Biden administration will seek to overrule the actions taken by the NLRB under President Trump.

One of the big areas that will be targeted is joint employment. Micheli expects the new administration to make it easier to make joint employers liable for violations. For example, he says, in franchise agreements, the parent company could be held liable for labor and employment violations as they are

designated a joint employer with the franchisee.

Frank points out that we are already beginning to see examples of what Micheli laid out.

In December, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued a host of opinion letters and one had to do with tip pooling and how to allocate tips—whether the front house or back house staff should receive them.

President Biden retracted one of those opinion letters, and the DOL issued another advisory saying that its December letter was premature, Frank explains.

Two areas the DOL is likely to review, Micheli says, are the persuader rule, and union financial disclosure rules. He expects that President Biden, who has often called himself a union man, will make it easier for unions to report financial items.

Similar to what is on the horizon in California, Hoffman expects the federal government to address COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave, and seek mandates related to independent contractor laws.

California also is expected to take a number of actions on the labor and employment front. [Episode 107](#) of The Workplace podcast breaks down what labor laws employers can expect from state lawmakers this year.



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*The Workplace*

# California Labor Law Predictions



In **Episode 107** of The Workplace podcast, CalChamber Executive Vice President and General Counsel Erika Frank,

CalChamber Policy Advocate Ashley Hoffman, and Legislative Advocate Chris Micheli of Aprea & Micheli discuss what employment law changes employers can expect to occur this year at the state level.

## **Paid Sick Leave**

The federal and state COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave mandates expired at the end of last year, so the biggest labor law change Hoffman anticipates this year pertains to paid sick leave (PSL). Some cities have expanded PSL ordinances.

President Joseph Biden has laid out a proposal that has not yet been submitted to Congress, but would mandate PSL for all employers, not just for employers with fewer than 500 employees, she explains. The proposal does away with some of the exemptions previously granted to small employers and employers of first responders. The proposal, however, includes a tax credit for all employers with fewer than 500 employees to help reimburse PSL expenses.

California employers have seen some mandates come through in the form of emergency regulation from state agencies. Hoffman points out that the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) issued an emergency temporary regulation ordering that employees be excluded from the workplace for 14 days in the event of an exposure or diagnosis of COVID-19, and be provided with full paid benefits. This is especially concerning to a lot of businesses that are barely staying afloat.

"[Employers] thought they were going to get...a bit of a break from paid leave and then here comes in this uncapped mandate," she says.

In summary, Frank says, businesses

should expect to see more proposals to expand leave rights for workers and more leave management responsibilities for employers.

Will these PSL proposals be tied exclusively to COVID-19, Frank asks?

Micheli answers that it is possible to see non-COVID-19-related proposals that expand existing leaves or create new ones. For example, last year, a bill sought to establish a bereavement leave mandate, but failed to pass on to the Governor's desk. A bill similar to this failed proposal was one of the first to be introduced at the start of this year's session. So, PSL proposals might not solely be narrowed to COVID-19, he says.

## **Target on Specific Industries**

Another issue that is being talked about is legislation that targets specific industries. For example, labor organizations and Democratic legislators recently held a briefing on garment industry workers and discussed possible crackdowns on the garment manufacturing industry, Micheli says.

Similarly, Micheli has heard of possible proposals to increase wages for grocery store workers, known as "Heroes Pay."

Hoffman agrees, stating that this type of law has already been seen at the local level.

Also, she says, Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego) is working on a bill that addresses fast food workers specifically, but the particulars of that proposal are not yet known.

## **Independent Contractors**

Micheli expects worker classification to continue to be a top issue this year. Between the enactment of AB 5 in 2019 and AB 2257 in 2020, 109 professions have been granted exemptions from the ABC worker classification test, and it is likely that more industries will pursue exemptions this year.

Micheli also expects clean up language changes to AB 5 (California's independent contractor law) to be introduced.

Hoffman adds that there is talk of a bill to tax the commission rideshare companies earn.

## **Other Top Issues**

Other issues Hoffman anticipates will be addressed this year are workplace safety, employment insurance, and reforms to the California Employment Development Department (EDD).

Micheli says that a hot topic of interest to both employees and employers is addressing flexible workplace scheduling laws to better reflect telecommuting arrangements.

Hoffman explains that California wage and hour laws are really meant for employees that are physically at the workplace, and these laws have not truly been updated in a long time. The result is a number of rules that create inequity between exempt employees and non-exempt employees.

For example, Hoffman points out that many parents who work from home must also care for their children since many schools have closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These working parents often find it easier to divide their work responsibilities between the morning and afternoon, reserving the midday hours to care for their children. Due to split shift rules and premiums, many employers simply cannot afford to grant this type of arrangement and flexibility to nonexempt employees.

Frank adds that while many employers want to provide their workers with flexibility, labor and employment laws often tie employers' hands on what can be done.

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## CalChamber Members Answer Oakland African American Chamber Call to Support Resiliency Fund to Help Small Businesses

When the coronavirus pandemic hit last year and local small businesses struggled to survive, the Oakland African American Chamber of Commerce (OAACC) launched a grant program to help with major support from a number of CalChamber members.

In just 90 days starting in late April, the OAACC resiliency fund raised more than \$1 million from corporations, charitable funds, private businesses and individuals throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

"This is an opportunity for us to come together," OAACC President and CEO Cathy Adams said in a Facebook video asking for contributions to the resiliency program, a theme repeated in the program website headline: "Reopening Black Businesses Together."

Among the more than 200 companies and individuals responding to Adams' appeal were CalChamber members: The Clorox Company (\$200,000), Blue Shield of California (\$100,000) and Kaiser Permanente (\$100,000).

Other sponsors included CalChamber members OUTSOURCE Consulting Services, Inc., Comcast, JP Morgan Chase, Safeway, the Oakland A's, First Republic, Umpqua Bank, San Francisco Foundation, Fox Rothschild LLP, Morgan Stanley, and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD).

### Helping Businesses Pivot

Grants from the resiliency fund ranged from \$2,500 to \$10,000, providing relief for expenses such as rent, equipment, supplies, technology and financial training.

Small business owner Iguehi James of Love Iguehi fashions used her \$5,000 grant for added costs, including buying some material at retail prices because it was the fastest way to obtain a fabric, as well as to hire a photographer to help further develop her website and pay for online ads to drive traffic to the site.

She also began making face masks

in addition to the colorful head wraps, dresses, skirts and kaftans cut from African Ankara prints that are the hallmark of her custom clothing and apparel company.

"At a time of great uncertainty, the OAACC Resiliency Fund provided financial support for Love Iguehi," said James in an email. "The funding gave us confidence to transition our prod-

Chef Leilani Baugh, another grant recipient, moved her Magnolia Street Wine Lounge and Kitchen, changed her business model and bought new equipment. She redid her restaurant to accommodate outdoor dining and take-out orders, and in late August 2020 was preparing 300 meals for local residents in need, partnering with Chef José Andrés and his World Central Kitchen.

### Temporary Relief

"We are aware that these grants will in no way make up for all of the financial losses experienced by many of our members, their families and employees; the intent is to provide relevant short-term relief," OAACC Board Chairwoman Shonda Scott told the Post News Group in August 2020.

Sales for Love Iguehi, for example, dropped about 95% in the spring of 2020 when the stay home orders left local marketplaces empty and conferences and trade shows were postponed.

### Why Businesses Help

"We could not have done this alone but for the benevolence and goodwill of others...they have truly become a lifeline for our businesses," Adams told the Post News Group in August 2020.

Kimberly Goode, senior vice president of external affairs for Blue Shield of California, summed up the reasons for the company's support of the OAACC resiliency fund and other community causes in a December 2020 news item:

"We understand how this pandemic and the economic uncertainty from it is impacting health and well-being of communities we serve. We also know communities of color have been disproportionately affected, and this is one way we are working to close the gap.

"The pandemic has reminded all of us that caring for each other unites us, strengthens us and prepares us to be our best in good times and challenging times."



Photo by Matt Everitt Courtesy Blue Shield of California

**Iguehi James, owner of Love Iguehi, uses African Ankara prints to create fashions that reflect both her Oakland roots and her Nigerian heritage.**

uct line to reflect the shifting desires of our customer base during these times. Fortunately, as a relatively new small business, we can say our pivot to new products allowed our company to continue to grow in 2020 and we look forward to a successful 2021."

Another recipient of a \$5,000 grant, Robert Dorsey, chief and owner of Robert Dorsey Catering & Events, used the money to help pay workers, including a prep cook and a delivery and operations person. He also contracted with social media and public relations experts to help him rebrand his business.

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grants of \$5,000 to \$25,000 for small businesses, nonprofits and cultural institutions hurt by the pandemic.

To be eligible to apply, the annual gross revenue of the business needs to be between \$1,000 and \$2.5 million.

Grant money may be used for costs such as payroll, health care benefits, rent, utilities and more.

### Fee Waivers

CalChamber-supported **SB 94**

**(Skinner; D-Berkeley)** waives for two years license renewal fees for restaurants, bars, barbers and cosmetologists.

Annual fees for bars and restaurants licensed through the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control range from \$455 to \$1,235, according to the Governor's office, which estimated the fee relief will apply to 59,000 businesses. More than 600,000 barbering and cosmetology individuals and businesses are licensed through the Department of Consumer Affairs.

### Still Pending

Set to be considered by the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee on March 1 is CalChamber-supported **AB 80 (Burke; D-Inglewood)**, which brings California into partial conformity with federal tax treatment of deductible business expenses paid for using PPP funds. Once signed, the bill will allow businesses to deduct up to \$150,000 in expenses covered by the PPP loan from their state income taxes.

**Staff Contact: Preston Young**

## California Releases Employer COVID-19 Compliance Portal

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- COVID-19 laws that employers should be aware of (such as AB 685, SB 1159 and the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 emergency temporary standard);

- Communicating COVID-19 information to employees;
- Safety practices;
- Testing information; and
- Steps needed to reopen safely.

The website also consolidates information and resources related to employers' obligations when an employee is sick or exposed to COVID-19, including recording and reporting requirements, outbreak information, cleaning procedures, leave benefits and return-to-work criteria.

### Helpful Tool

The most helpful website tool is the **COVID-19 Employer Portal**. The portal generates a customized guidance "road map" based on information that an employer supplies.

If employers are trying to figure out which guidance applies to their business, they can enter information about their business location, business type/industry, existing safety procedures and practices, and other details, and the portal generates a custom guide with the specific information applicable to them, including both state and local requirements and guidance.

This portal is a great place to start

for employers planning to reopen or increase activities as their county moves through the COVID-19 tier system. It's also a useful tool for employers who have remained open and are already complying with the myriad governmental laws, standards, orders and guidance because the custom road map can be used as a checklist to help ensure employers' existing practices follow the latest state and local guidance.

Employers should consider adding the new **website** to their COVID-19 book-mark collection and monitor for further developments.

**Staff Contact: James W. Ward**

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# World Trade Organization Announces First Woman and African as Director General



The World Trade Organization (WTO) announced on February 15 that Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of

Nigeria will be Director General. She will be the first woman and African Director General in the nearly 75-year history of the WTO and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Dr. Okonjo-Iweala will take office on March 1 and select her four deputies on the basis of members' recommendations, as consensus is the WTO norm. With her term lasting until August 31, 2025, she will serve four years and six months, which is a longer term for the head of the WTO, due to her predecessor departing early.

The Geneva-based WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. Its main function is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations, and ratified or approved in their parliaments or legislatures. The goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters and importers conduct business. There are more than 60 agreements dealing with goods, services, investment measures and intellectual property rights.

## Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria

Dr. Okonjo-Iweala, who became a U.S. citizen in 2019, is a global finance expert, economist and international development professional with more than 30 years of experience. Dr. Okonjo-Iweala served as Nigeria's Finance Minister from 2003–2006 and 2011–2015, and briefly as Foreign Minister in 2006, being the first woman to hold both positions.

In her time as Finance Minister, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala negotiated with the Paris Club of Creditors to wipe out \$30 billion of Nigeria's debt and led reforms that enhanced government transparency and strengthened institutions against corruption.

Dr. Okonjo-Iweala had a 25-year career at the World Bank, where she served as a development economist and rose to the

No. 2 position of managing director. Dr. Okonjo-Iweala has received many awards and recognitions as a top female leader in Africa and the world including: Top 3 Most Powerful Women in Africa (*Forbes*, 2012); Top 100 Most Influential People in the World (*TIME*, 2014); Global Finance Minister of the Year (*Euromoney*, 2005); and the Madeleine K. Albright Global Development Award from the Aspen Institute in 2017.

Most recently, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala became an Angelopoulos Global Public Leader at Harvard University's Kennedy School and currently serves on many boards including the Board of the African Union's African Risk Capacity (ARC) as the chair. Dr. Okonjo-Iweala earned a Ph.D. in regional economics and development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## Selection Process

On May 14, 2020, then-WTO Director General Roberto Azevêdo of Brazil suddenly announced he would leave the position on August 31, a year before the formal end of his term.

Azevêdo said in a statement that he timed his departure so the process of selecting his successor wouldn't distract the WTO's next big ministerial conference. Now delayed into 2021, the next major WTO meeting could be a turning point for discussions on the organization's future. Modernization and reform of the trading system will be a major topic.

Director General candidates were nominated by their governments starting June 8, 2020, then invited to present their views and answer questions at a special General Council meeting of WTO members. Historically, a new Director General is appointed by consensus of the General Council following several months during which candidates have the opportunity to make themselves known to WTO members.

By October 2020, the field of eight was narrowed to two candidates. Dr. Okonjo-Iweala was the consensus candidate; however, the United States held up her nomination, supporting runner-up trade minister Yoo Myung-hee of South Korea. The WTO then stalled the nomination process, hoping to find a U.S. consen-

sus with the new Biden administration.

Throughout 2020, the United States remained steadfast in opposing the WTO. Trump administration spokespersons said the WTO's dispute settlement system threatens U.S. sovereign rights, has strayed from its original mandate, and allowed nations to gain concessions they never would have been able to obtain at the negotiating table.

## U.S. Backs Dr. Okonjo-Iweala

On February 4, 2021, the United States gave its formal backing to Dr. Okonjo-Iweala to lead the WTO. The Biden administration declared its "strong support" for Dr. Okonjo-Iweala to serve as the WTO's next director general. The decision broke with the Trump administration's support for South Korean Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hee and brought the U.S. in line with much of the rest of the world.

"Dr. Okonjo-Iweala brings a wealth of knowledge in economics and international diplomacy from her 25 years with the World Bank and two terms as Nigerian Finance Minister. She is widely respected for her effective leadership and has proven experience managing a large international organization with a diverse membership," the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative wrote in a statement.

In early February, Yoo had withdrawn her bid to lead the WTO, as President Joe Biden's administration indicated it preferred a swift move to appoint a WTO leader.

## Minister Yoo Myung-Hee

Minister Yoo is the first female trade minister in the Republic of Korea. During her 25-year career in trade, she has been a key free trade agreement (FTA) strategist for Korea. Minister Yoo took charge of the WTO affairs in the Korean Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, and negotiated the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Korea-China FTA, and the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) FTA, among other initiatives.

She was the first director of the new FTA Policy Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, designing Korea's FTA strategy in 2005 that resulted in an FTA network which includes 56

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countries at all levels of development. She has an M.A. in public policy from Seoul National University, a J.D. from Vanderbilt University and was admitted to the New York State Bar in 2003.

### WTO Candidates

As of July 8, 2020, the closing date for applications, the candidates for WTO Director General also included:

- **Dr. Jesús Seade Kuri, Mexico.** Chief negotiator of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

- **Abdel-Hamid Mamdouh, Egypt.** An Egyptian negotiator and a senior WTO official since 1990.

- **Ambassador Tudor Ulianoschi, Moldova.** Recent Minister of Foreign Affairs.

- **Ambassador Amina C. Mohamed, Kenya.** Kenya's Permanent Representative and Ambassador to the WTO from 2000 to 2006.

- **Minister Mohammad Maziad Al-Tuwaijri, Saudi Arabia.** Most recently served as Minister of Economy and Planning.

- **Dr. Liam Fox, United Kingdom.** Former Secretary of State for Defense and U.K. Secretary of State for International Trade.

### Impact

The WTO is a multilateral treaty subscribed to by 164 governments, which together account for the majority of world trade (with more than 20 nations negotiating their accession). Successful multilateral negotiating rounds have helped increase world trade; the WTO estimates the 1994 Uruguay Round trade deal added more than \$100 billion to world income. The World Bank estimates that new successful world trade talks could bring nearly \$325 billion in income to the developing world and lift 500 million people out of poverty. Other studies have shown that eliminating trade barriers would mean \$2,500 per year in increased income to the average U.S. family of four.

For U.S. businesses, successful implementation of WTO negotiations would translate to expanded market access for U.S. farm products and U.S.-manufactured goods; reduced cost of exporting to some countries; and improvement in foreign customs procedures that currently cause shipment delays.

### Anticipated Action

The California Chamber of Commerce is hopeful that with a new Director General now selected by consensus, there can be a path forward for the WTO to

tackle reforms within the organization. The revamp should address the functioning of the Appellate Body, encourage greater transparency and enhance discipline for members who fall behind on or do not adhere to reporting obligations.

The Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference, originally planned for June 2020 in Kazakhstan, now may be scheduled for December 2021.

### CalChamber Position

The CalChamber, in keeping with longstanding policy, enthusiastically supports free trade worldwide, expansion of international trade and investment, fair and equitable market access for California products abroad and elimination of disincentives that impede the international competitiveness of California business.

The WTO has a positive impact on how California producers of goods and services compete in overseas markets, as well as domestically, and creates jobs and economic growth through expanded international trade and investment.

The WTO gives businesses improved access to foreign markets and better rules to ensure that competition with foreign businesses is conducted fairly.

**Staff Contact: Susanne T. Stirling**



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