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IN THIS EDITION, YOU WILL FIND:

- Many pro-worker regulatory updates from several government agencies.
- The details on OSHA investigations on Amazon and Trulieve.
- News around the nation and in your region.

National Legislative and Political News

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [announced](#) that noncitizen workers who are victims of, or witnesses to, the violation of labor rights, can now access a streamlined and expedited deferred action request process.
- DOL [published new resources](#) for employers and workers to help prevent heat illness and injury.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS) has [released Medicare Part D price negotiation](#) dates. The agency announced the first 10 Medicare Part D drugs [selected for negotiations](#) the list of drugs and their prices will be made public by September 1.
- The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued [hazard alert letters](#) to Amazon for [failing to keep workers safe](#) after inspections in facilities in New York, Illinois, and Florida.
- CMS [announced two new measures](#) for underperforming nursing homes. The measures will reduce inappropriate drug use and allow patients' families to more easily find out what nursing homes have been cited for deficiencies.
- The Biden Administration [extended the COVID-19 public health emergency](#) for 90 days—until April 11, 2023—and said that it will give 60-days' notice before ending the emergency.
- [UFCW applauds the FTC for proposing a rule to ban employee non-compete agreements](#). UFCW has long fought against these clauses in our members' contracts, which negatively impact wages & working conditions. This would be a HUGE win for all hardworking Americans.
- OSHA and Trulieve announced a voluntary settlement where the company will undertake a study to determine whether ground cannabis dust should be [considered a "hazardous chemical"](#) in an occupational environment. The settlement comes after the [death of Trulieve worker Lorna McMurrey](#), who died of occupational asthma which and OSHA investigation revealed was a result of working with ground cannabis dust.
- UFCW joined 50 cattle, farm, rural and consumer groups to [send a letter to U.S. Senate and House members who cosponsored the American Beef Labeling Act](#) in the 117th Congress.

- [A new study shows](#) that companies—especially in retail and food service—evade paying about \$4 billion in overtime wages by inventing dubious titles for employees so they can claim they are salaried managers.
- CMS has released a blueprint that will assist State Medicaid directors in [helping enrollees who lose their coverage](#) after the COVID public health emergency ends. Eligibility for these individuals will expire on April 1, and was part of Congress' year-end appropriations bill.
- White House sent a directive to all federal [agencies to ensure labor advisors are in place at agencies](#) to improve implementation and compliance with contract labor law requirements for Federal contractor.

News From Around the Nation

REGION 1

- New York Gov. Kathy Hochul is still deciding whether to [sue the state Senate](#) after a key committee voted to reject her nominee for chief judge, Hector LaSalle. At last week's Judiciary Committee hearing, state Senators claim one ruling in particular from LaSalle harmed the labor movement. But so far, they have passed no legislation to counter that ruling.
- Job applicants in [Massachusetts may gain better insights into their potential salary prospects under newly filed legislation on Beacon Hill](#). Employers with 15 or more workers would be required to share estimated salary ranges on job postings and advertisements, should a bill filed by state Reps. Josh Cutler and Brandy Fluker Oakley move forward in this new legislation session. Employers would also need to disclose pay ranges when offering promotions or transfers to new positions.

Region 2

- With Maryland lawmakers [facing a July 1 deadline](#) to provide a framework for the legal use, possession and sale of cannabis after voters approved full legalization in November, it's clear, just a week into the General Assembly session, that the task won't be straightforward. While the public is generally enthusiastic about legalization, which passed with 67% support, legislators have a lot of work to do to build a legal market that fulfills their commitments on issues like equity, public safety, and taxation and revenue.
- With the [Pennsylvania state House of Representatives stuck in a partisan gridlock](#), House Speaker Mark Rozzi has decided to launch a statewide listening tour to gather input on how to address it and deliver justice for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. "As a rank-and-file member of the House for 10 years, I was never involved in the behind-the-scenes politics of the General Assembly," said Mr. Rozzi, who was elected as a compromise candidate for speaker in the narrowly divided chamber. "Now, having been thrust into it over the last two weeks, I can tell you one thing: Harrisburg is broken."

Region 4

- On January 11th the Michigan Legislature was officially sworn in with Democrats at the helm of both chambers for the first time in 40 years. During their first week of official

business, committee assignments were made with key labor allies, Jim Haadasm leading the House Labor Committee and [former UFCW 951 member Senator John Cherry](#) tapped to lead the Labor committee in the Senate. [Democrats also introduced their first package of bills](#) outlining their priorities that includes a repeal of the state's Retirement Tax, expansion of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), restore the state's prevailing wage, **and a repeal Michigan's so called "Right to Work" law.**

- A small faction of Republican legislators in the Ohio House, led by Rep. Derrick Merrin, met in a closed door meeting to discuss their priorities. [Included in their list of priorities is HJR6](#), the proposed reform that would make it harder for Ohioans to reform the state constitution through ballot initiatives that failed to pass the 2022 lame duck session.
- [Congressman Jim Banks, of Indiana's 3rd congressional district, officially announced his campaign for the open Indiana Senate seat](#) after Senator Braun announced that he would not be seeking re-election in December 2022. Congressman Banks was first elected to the U.S. House in 2012, and during his time in the House he has been a staunch ally to House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and was a key Trump ally who voted against certifying the election for President Biden after the January 6th insurrection.

Region 5

- In Florida, Gov. DeSantis seeks to [permanently ban mandates](#) on COVID vaccines and masks.
If this is approved by the Florida Legislature, the measures would restrict shot and mask rules in all schools and prevent public and private employers from hiring and firing based on shot status.
- Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders announced Wednesday that it is unconstitutional for public entities [to require people to wear masks](#) as a COVID-19 prevention measure.

Region 6

- In Iowa, legislators have introduced legislation to ask the USDA for a waiver to change what SNAP recipients can spend their benefits on which would include [prohibiting the purchase of fresh meat](#), canned fruits, canned vegetables, white grains, cooking oils, spices including salt and pepper, baked or refried or chili beans, and sliced or cubed or crumbled cheese.
- In April, Wisconsin will have their spring elections, which includes the Wisconsin Supreme Court race, which [will decide if the makeup](#) of the court leans conservative or progressive. The court will take up Wisconsin's redistricting case which progressives are fighting to have fair maps.

Region 7

- In Montana, the Senate Business, Labor and Economic Development Committee held a hearing on [SB 140](#) on 1/20. The bill would prohibit payroll deduction for agency fees or other payments to unions for nonprofit employees unless the employee affirmatively consents to the fees/payments. The bill also prohibits healthcare facilities from collecting agency fees or additional payments from an employee's wages without affirmative consent from the employee.

- Newly elected Colorado state legislator is a former ride-share driver [looking to win protections](#) for workers.
- DOL has filed a complaint in federal court against the operator of a Firestone franchise restaurant who allegedly fired two workers whom the employer believed [complained to the Wage and Hour](#) Division about the employer's pay practice and participated in the investigation that followed.

Region 8

- A [California law intended to raise fast-food industry wages](#) and working conditions won't go in effect pending a voter referendum, according to a Sacramento Superior Court judge's ruling..
Something about MN cannabis, CT econ development.
- Hawaii advocates are feeling confident about the prospects of [advancing marijuana legalization](#) in the new session, with an activist coalition holding a recent press conference alongside state lawmakers to lay out the path forward for reform.
- The California Attorney General has [filed a lawsuit against the country's largest insulin makers](#) and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). The lawsuit accuses Eli Lilly, Novo Nordisk, Sanofi, CVS Caremark, Express Scripts, and Optum Rx of using their market power to overcharge patients for insulin.