

Introduced by

Senators Klein, Hogue, Robinson

Representatives Keiser, Lefor, Roers Jones

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 34-14-05 and 34-14-09 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to investigation of wage collection claims; to provide an effective date;  
3 and to declare an emergency.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 34-14-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **34-14-05. Enforcement.**

8 ~~It is the duty of the~~

- 9 1. ~~The~~ labor commissioner or the commissioner's deputy ~~to~~shall ensure compliance with  
10 ~~the provisions of this chapter, to investigate as to any~~alleged violations of this chapter,  
11 ~~and to institute or cause to be instituted actions for penalties and forfeitures provided~~  
12 ~~hereunder~~related to violation of this chapter.
- 13 2. The commissioner or the commissioner's deputy may hold hearings on the merits of  
14 any claim and shall cooperate with any employee in the enforcement of a claim  
15 against the employee's employer in any case ~~whenever~~if, in the commissioner's  
16 opinion, the claim is valid.
- 17 3. In investigating a complaint under this chapter, the commissioner may require the  
18 attendance of a witness and the production of a book, record, document, data, or  
19 other object at any hearing or with reference to any matter the commissioner has the  
20 authority to investigate under this chapter.
- 21 a. If under this subsection a witness fails or refuses to appear or to produce, the  
22 commissioner may issue a subpoena to compel the witness to appear or a  
23 subpoena duces tecum to compel the witness to appear and produce a relevant  
24 book, record, document, data, or other object.

1           b. If a person refuses to obey a subpoena, the district court, upon application by the  
2           commissioner, may issue to the person an order requiring the person to appear  
3           and give evidence or otherwise produce documentary evidence requested by the  
4           commissioner regarding the matter under investigation.

5           c. A witness subpoenaed under this section who appears at a hearing or has a  
6           deposition taken is entitled to receive the same fees and mileage as a witness in  
7           a civil case in district court.

8           4. The commissioner may consider any offsets, deductions, or counterclaims asserted by  
9           an employer during the commissioner's investigation and determination of the validity,  
10          enforceability, and amount of any claim for wages. An employer ~~must~~shall disclose the  
11          basis for and the amount of any claimed offset, deduction, or counterclaim to the  
12          commissioner within the time the commissioner directs.

13          5. The commissioner and the commissioner's authorized representatives have the right  
14          to enter places of employment for the purpose of inspecting records and seeing that all  
15          provisions of this chapter are complied with.

16          **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 34-14-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
17          amended and reenacted as follows:

18          **34-14-09. Employees' remedies - Limitation on wages collectible. (~~Effective through~~**  
19          **~~June 30, 2019~~)**

20          1. An employee may file with the department a claim for wages due under this chapter or  
21          under chapter 34-06 if the filing is made within two years from the date the wages are  
22          due and the amount of the wages claimed due is at least one hundred twenty-five  
23          dollars but not more than fifteen thousand dollars. For purposes of this section, wages  
24          are due at each regular payday immediately following the work period during which  
25          wages were earned. If the department denies the claim for wages due because the  
26          amount claimed is less than one hundred twenty-five dollars, the department shall  
27          inform the claimant of the opportunity for the claimant to pursue the claim in small  
28          claims court under chapter 27-08.1. If the department denies the claim for wages due  
29          because the amount claimed is more than fifteen thousand dollars, the department  
30          shall inform the claimant of the opportunity for the claimant to pursue the claim in  
31          district court under chapter 27-05.

- 1           2.    If the labor commissioner determines wages have not been paid and that the unpaid  
2           wages constitute an enforceable claim, the commissioner, upon request of the  
3           employee, may take an assignment in trust for the wages or a claim for liquidated  
4           damages in amounts the commissioner deems valid and enforceable without being  
5           bound by the technical rules respecting the validity of any assignments and may bring  
6           any legal action necessary to collect the claim. With the consent of the assigning  
7           employee at the time of the assignment, the commissioner may settle and adjust the  
8           claim to the same extent as the assigning employee.
- 9           3.    The limitation of action under section 34-01-13 is tolled by the filing of a claim with the  
10          commissioner until the commissioner determines the claim is not enforceable or the  
11          commissioner reassigns the claim to the employee.

12           **~~Employees' remedies -- Limitation on wages collectible. (Effective after June 30, 2019)~~**

13   ~~An employee may file a claim for wages due under this chapter or under chapter 34-06 with the~~  
14   ~~department not later than two years from the date the wages are due. For purposes of this~~  
15   ~~section, wages are due at each regular payday immediately following the work period during~~  
16   ~~which wages were earned. Whenever the labor commissioner determines that wages have not~~  
17   ~~been paid and that the unpaid wages constitute an enforceable claim, the commissioner, upon~~  
18   ~~request of the employee, may take an assignment in trust for the wages or a claim for liquidated~~  
19   ~~damages in amounts the commissioner deems valid and enforceable without being bound by~~  
20   ~~any of the technical rules respecting the validity of any assignments and may bring any legal~~  
21   ~~action necessary to collect the claim. The limitation of action under section 34-01-13 is tolled by~~  
22   ~~the filing of a claim with the commissioner until the commissioner determines the claim is not~~  
23   ~~enforceable or the commissioner reassigns the claim to the employee. With the consent of the~~  
24   ~~assigning employee at the time of the assignment, the commissioner may settle and adjust the~~  
25   ~~claim to the same extent as the assigning employee.~~

26           **SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Act becomes effective July 1, 2019.

27           **SECTION 4. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.