

FILED

MAR 17 2021

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U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

THE ERISA INDUSTRY COMMITTEE,

Plaintiff-Appellant,

v.

CITY OF SEATTLE,

Defendant-Appellee.

No. 20-35472

D.C. No. 2:18-cv-01188-TSZ

MEMORANDUM*

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Western District of Washington
Thomas S. Zilly, District Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted March 1, 2021
Seattle, Washington

Before: TASHIMA, RAWLINSON, and BYBEE, Circuit Judges.

The ERISA Industry Committee (ERIC) appeals the district court's Rule 12(b)(6) dismissal of its action against the City of Seattle (the City). In its complaint, ERIC asserted that the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) preempted Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) § 14.28, a health benefits

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

ordinance requiring hotel employers and ancillary hotel businesses to provide money directly to designated employees, or to include those employees in the employers' health benefit plan.

Contrary to ERIC's argument, "state and local laws enjoy a presumption against [ERISA] preemption when they clearly operate in a field that has been traditionally occupied by the States." *Golden Gate Rest. Ass'n v. City & Cnty. of San Francisco*, 546 F.3d 639, 647 (9th Cir. 2008) (citation and internal quotation marks omitted); *see also Depot, Inc. v. Caring for Montanans, Inc.*, 915 F.3d 643, 666 (9th Cir. 2019). Even so, unlike the statute in *Gobeille v. Liberty Mutual Ins. Co.*, which required disclosure of health care information and payments, SMC § 14.28 does not "enter[] a fundamental area of ERISA regulation," such as reporting and disclosure of health care claims and payments. 136 S. Ct. 936, 940, 946 (2016); *see also N.Y. State Conf. of Blue Cross & Blue Shield Plans v. Travelers Ins. Co.*, 514 U.S. 645, 661 (1995) ("[N]othing in the language of [ERISA] or the context of its passage indicates that Congress chose to displace general health care regulation, which historically has been a matter of local concern.") (citations omitted).

ERISA preempts "any and all State laws insofar as they may now or hereafter relate to any employee benefit plan." 29 U.S.C. § 1144(a). We agree

with the district court that SMC § 14.28 does not relate to any employee benefit plan in a manner that triggers ERISA preemption. The outcome of this case is controlled by our decision in *Golden Gate*. See 546 F.3d at 661 (concluding that a San Francisco ordinance requiring business to make certain minimum health care expenditures on behalf of covered employees was not preempted by ERISA). As in *Golden Gate*, SMC §14.28 does not “relate to” employers’ ERISA plans because an employer “may fully discharge its expenditure obligations by making the required level of employee health care expenditures, whether those expenditures are made in whole or in part to an ERISA plan, or in whole or in part to [a third party].” *Id.* at 655-56.

ERIC argues that *Golden Gate* is distinguishable because the San Francisco ordinance did not include a direct payment option from the employer to the employee. However, we expressly noted in *Golden Gate* that there was no ERISA preemption “even if the payments are made by the employer directly to the employees who are the beneficiaries of the putative plan.” *Id.* at 649 (internal quotation marks omitted). *Golden Gate* relied for this proposition on *Fort Halifax Packing Co., Inc. v. Coyne*, 482 U.S. 1, 3, 16 (1987), which explicitly addressed direct payment from the employer to the employee. See *Golden Gate*, 546 F.3d at 649.

Because ERIC failed to distinguish SMC § 14.28 on any meaningful point from the ordinance upheld in *Golden Gate*, dismissal in favor of the City was consistent with our precedent. *See* 546 F.3d at 661.

AFFIRMED.

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

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95 Seventh Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Information Regarding Judgment and Post-Judgment Proceedings

Judgment

- This Court has filed and entered the attached judgment in your case. Fed. R. App. P. 36. Please note the filed date on the attached decision because all of the dates described below run from that date, not from the date you receive this notice.

Mandate (Fed. R. App. P. 41; 9th Cir. R. 41-1 & -2)

- The mandate will issue 7 days after the expiration of the time for filing a petition for rehearing or 7 days from the denial of a petition for rehearing, unless the Court directs otherwise. To file a motion to stay the mandate, file it electronically via the appellate ECF system or, if you are a pro se litigant or an attorney with an exemption from using appellate ECF, file one original motion on paper.

Petition for Panel Rehearing (Fed. R. App. P. 40; 9th Cir. R. 40-1)

Petition for Rehearing En Banc (Fed. R. App. P. 35; 9th Cir. R. 35-1 to -3)

(1) A. Purpose (Panel Rehearing):

- A party should seek panel rehearing only if one or more of the following grounds exist:
 - ▶ A material point of fact or law was overlooked in the decision;
 - ▶ A change in the law occurred after the case was submitted which appears to have been overlooked by the panel; or
 - ▶ An apparent conflict with another decision of the Court was not addressed in the opinion.
- Do not file a petition for panel rehearing merely to reargue the case.

B. Purpose (Rehearing En Banc)

- A party should seek en banc rehearing only if one or more of the following grounds exist:

- ▶ Consideration by the full Court is necessary to secure or maintain uniformity of the Court's decisions; or
- ▶ The proceeding involves a question of exceptional importance; or
- ▶ The opinion directly conflicts with an existing opinion by another court of appeals or the Supreme Court and substantially affects a rule of national application in which there is an overriding need for national uniformity.

(2) Deadlines for Filing:

- A petition for rehearing may be filed within 14 days after entry of judgment. Fed. R. App. P. 40(a)(1).
- If the United States or an agency or officer thereof is a party in a civil case, the time for filing a petition for rehearing is 45 days after entry of judgment. Fed. R. App. P. 40(a)(1).
- If the mandate has issued, the petition for rehearing should be accompanied by a motion to recall the mandate.
- *See* Advisory Note to 9th Cir. R. 40-1 (petitions must be received on the due date).
- An order to publish a previously unpublished memorandum disposition extends the time to file a petition for rehearing to 14 days after the date of the order of publication or, in all civil cases in which the United States or an agency or officer thereof is a party, 45 days after the date of the order of publication. 9th Cir. R. 40-2.

(3) Statement of Counsel

- A petition should contain an introduction stating that, in counsel's judgment, one or more of the situations described in the "purpose" section above exist. The points to be raised must be stated clearly.

(4) Form & Number of Copies (9th Cir. R. 40-1; Fed. R. App. P. 32(c)(2))

- The petition shall not exceed 15 pages unless it complies with the alternative length limitations of 4,200 words or 390 lines of text.
- The petition must be accompanied by a copy of the panel's decision being challenged.
- An answer, when ordered by the Court, shall comply with the same length limitations as the petition.
- If a pro se litigant elects to file a form brief pursuant to Circuit Rule 28-1, a petition for panel rehearing or for rehearing en banc need not comply with Fed. R. App. P. 32.

- The petition or answer must be accompanied by a Certificate of Compliance found at Form 11, available on our website at www.ca9.uscourts.gov under *Forms*.
- You may file a petition electronically via the appellate ECF system. No paper copies are required unless the Court orders otherwise. If you are a pro se litigant or an attorney exempted from using the appellate ECF system, file one original petition on paper. No additional paper copies are required unless the Court orders otherwise.

Bill of Costs (Fed. R. App. P. 39, 9th Cir. R. 39-1)

- The Bill of Costs must be filed within 14 days after entry of judgment.
- See Form 10 for additional information, available on our website at www.ca9.uscourts.gov under *Forms*.

Attorneys Fees

- Ninth Circuit Rule 39-1 describes the content and due dates for attorneys fees applications.
- All relevant forms are available on our website at www.ca9.uscourts.gov under *Forms* or by telephoning (415) 355-7806.

Petition for a Writ of Certiorari

- Please refer to the Rules of the United States Supreme Court at www.supremecourt.gov

Counsel Listing in Published Opinions

- Please check counsel listing on the attached decision.
- If there are any errors in a published opinion, please send a letter **in writing within 10 days** to:
 - ▶ Thomson Reuters; 610 Opperman Drive; PO Box 64526; Eagan, MN 55123 (Attn: Jean Green, Senior Publications Coordinator);
 - ▶ and electronically file a copy of the letter via the appellate ECF system by using “File Correspondence to Court,” or if you are an attorney exempted from using the appellate ECF system, mail the Court one copy of the letter.

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT
Form 10. Bill of Costs**

Instructions for this form: <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/forms/form10instructions.pdf>

9th Cir. Case Number(s)

Case Name

The Clerk is requested to award costs to (*party name(s)*):

I swear under penalty of perjury that the copies for which costs are requested were actually and necessarily produced, and that the requested costs were actually expended.

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