



Labor Update No.2 February, 2017

This bulletin contains information on law changes that have either passed, or are being discussed, in parliament, court decisions, and other labor issues in Japan that are of interest to activists.

1. National Personnel Authority partially revises notice on operation of rules (announced Dec. 1, 2016; effective Jan. 1, 2017)
 - Clarifies that making mock of someone's sexual orientation or gender identity will be considered sexual harassment and will not be permitted.

2. It has become clear that the government's Regulatory Reform Committee is moving in the direction of proposing an amendment to the Labor Standards Law so that workers will be able to take paid vacation days starting from their first day on the job.

3. As of Oct. 31, 2016, according to a survey by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Labor, the number of foreign nationals working for Japanese companies has exceeded 1 million for the first time since this survey began being carried out.

4. The Government is coordinating in the direction of setting the upper limit, with penalty, for overtime work at 100 hours per month, and aims to submit the proposal to the current Diet.
 - 100 hours per month is known as the "karoshi line" (*Karoshi*=death from overwork).
 - This bill will likely not include the stricter penalties demanded by the opposition.

5. The Interior Ministry's Statistics Bureau released the results of the "2016 Workforce Survey" on January 31, 2017.

Some points:

- Irregular workers account for 37.5% of all employees, a higher proportion than ever before.
- The proportion of workers shifting from regular to irregular employment is higher the older the age group.
- The yearly average employment rate among those 15-64 years of age was 74.3%, the highest proportion since statistics have been recorded.