

With the dawn of every New Year comes a slew of new laws that go into effect, the state legislature having passed them the year prior. 2012 is no different as multiple laws in California will change personal liberties and the way we do business.

For better or for worse, nonsensical or justified, every Californian will have to abide by these new laws unless an uproar churns up a voter initiative and succeeds during election season, or it is overturned with a constitutional appeal. The new laws include but are not limited to:

Ban against requiring employers to use E-verify, an Internet-based system confirm employment eligibility. And employers can't do credit checks or consider potential employees' credit report upon hiring.

Open-carry citizen handgun ban. The law prohibits carrying a handgun in plain sight. Violators may be fined up to \$1,000 and spend six months in jail. California residents can still apply for a concealed weapon permit.

California gay bullying law (Seth's Law). School personnel must intervene if they witness gay bullying. Also, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) Equality and Equal Access in Higher Education Law. Public higher education institutions must create and enforce campus policies protecting the LGBT community from harassment and appoint employee contact persons to address relative on-campus matters. And Domestic Partnership Equality Act.

California gay history law. Gov. Brown signed legislation that mandates that school textbooks include LGBT accomplishments.

Reader Privacy Act. Government and third party "snoops" can no longer gather information on Internet users' reading, book shopping or e-book habits without a legal court order.

Tanning beds. Prohibition of the use of ultraviolet tanning devices by children under the age of

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Shark fins. Prohibition of the possession, sale, trade or distribution of shark fins. The new California law specifies that a person must hold a license in order to possess shark fins for scientific purposes. In addition, restaurants may possess and sell shark fins purchased before Jan. 1, 2012 until Jan. 1, 2013.

Cough syrup. Prohibits any person or retail distributor from knowingly supplying a drug or substance containing any quantity of dextromethorphan, or DXM, to a person under 18 without a prescription. DXM, an active ingredient in cough suppressants, is often used as a recreational drug.

The production and sale of caffeinated beer ban. Prohibits the production, distribution or sale of beer to which caffeine has been directly added as a separate ingredient.

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