

**SENATE BILL NO. 2117**

Introduced by

Industry, Business and Labor Committee

(At the request of the Department of Labor)

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 14-02.4-02, 14-02.4-14, 14-02.4-20, and  
2 14-02.4-23 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to department of labor discriminatory  
3 practices proceedings.

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

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 14-02.4-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **14-02.4-02. Definitions.** In this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise  
8 requires:

9 1. "Age" insofar as it refers to any prohibited unfair employment or other practice  
10 means at least forty years of age.

11 2. "Aggrieved person" includes any person who claims to have been injured by a  
12 discriminatory practice.

13 3. "Court" means the district court in the judicial district in which the alleged  
14 discriminatory practice occurred.

15 ~~3.~~ 4. "Department" means the division of human rights within the labor department.

16 ~~4.~~ 5. "Disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or  
17 more major life activities, a record of this impairment, or being regarded as having  
18 this impairment.

19 ~~5.~~ 6. "Discriminatory practice" means an act or attempted act which because of race,  
20 color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, status with  
21 regard to marriage or public assistance, or participation in lawful activity off the  
22 employer's premises during nonworking hours results in the unequal treatment or  
23 separation or segregation of any persons, or denies, prevents, limits, or otherwise  
24 adversely affects, or if accomplished would deny, prevent, limit, or otherwise

- 1 adversely affect, the benefit of enjoyment by any person of employment, labor  
2 union membership, public accommodations, public services, or credit transactions.  
3 The term "discriminate" includes segregate or separate and for purposes of  
4 discrimination based on sex, it includes sexual harassment. Sexual harassment  
5 includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually  
6 motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication  
7 of a sexual nature when:
- 8 a. Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition,  
9 either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining employment, public accommodations  
10 or public services, or education;
  - 11 b. Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual  
12 is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment, public  
13 accommodations or public services, education, or housing; or
  - 14 c. That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially  
15 interfering with an individual's employment, public accommodations, public  
16 services, or educational environment; and in the case of employment, the  
17 employer is responsible for its acts and those of its supervisory employees if it  
18 knows or should know of the existence of the harassment and fails to take  
19 timely and appropriate action.
- 20 ~~6.~~ 7. "Employee" means a person who performs services for an employer, who employs  
21 one or more individuals, for compensation, whether in the form of wages, salaries,  
22 commission, or otherwise. "Employee" does not include a person elected to public  
23 office in the state or political subdivision by the qualified voters thereof, or a person  
24 chosen by the officer to be on the officer's political staff, or an appointee on the  
25 policymaking level or an immediate advisor with respect to the exercise of the  
26 constitutional or legal powers of the office. Provided, "employee" does include a  
27 person subject to the civil service or merit system or civil service laws of the state  
28 government, governmental agency, or a political subdivision.
- 29 ~~7.~~ 8. "Employer" means a person within the state who employs one or more employees  
30 for more than one quarter of the year and a person wherever situated who employs

- 1                   one or more employees whose services are to be partially or wholly performed in  
2                   the state.
- 3       ~~8.~~ 9. "Employment agency" means a person regularly undertaking, with or without  
4                   compensation, to procure employees for an employer or to procure for employees  
5                   opportunity to work for an employer and includes any agent of the person.
- 6       ~~9.~~ 10. "Labor organization" means a person, employee representation committee, plan in  
7                   which employees participate, or other organization which exists solely or in part for  
8                   the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes,  
9                   wages, rates of pay, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment.
- 10     ~~10.~~ 11. "National origin" means the place of birth of an individual or any of the individual's  
11                   lineal ancestors.
- 12     ~~11.~~ 12. "Otherwise qualified person" means a person who is capable of performing the  
13                   essential functions of the particular employment in question.
- 14     ~~12.~~ 13. "Person" means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, limited liability  
15                   company, unincorporated organization, mutual company, joint stock company,  
16                   trust, agent, legal representative, trustee, trustee in bankruptcy, receiver, labor  
17                   organization, public body, public corporation, and the state and a political  
18                   subdivision and agency thereof.
- 19     ~~13.~~ 14. "Public accommodation" means every place, establishment, or facility of whatever  
20                   kind, nature, or class that caters or offers services, facilities, or goods to the  
21                   general public for a fee, charge, or gratuity. "Public accommodation" does not  
22                   include a bona fide private club or other place, establishment, or facility which is by  
23                   its nature distinctly private; provided, however, the distinctly private place,  
24                   establishment, or facility is a "public accommodation" during the period it caters or  
25                   offers services, facilities, or goods to the general public for a fee, charge, or  
26                   gratuity.
- 27     ~~14.~~ 15. "Public service" means a public facility, department, agency, board, or commission  
28                   owned, operated, or managed by or on behalf of this state, a political subdivision  
29                   thereof, or a public corporation.

- 1           16.   "Readily achievable" means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out  
2                   without much difficulty or expense by a person engaged in the provision of public  
3                   accommodations.
- 4    ~~45.~~ 17.   "Reasonable accommodations" means accommodations by an employer that do  
5                   not:  
6                   a.   Unduly disrupt or interfere with the employer's normal operations;  
7                   b.   Threaten the health or safety of the individual with a disability or others;  
8                   c.   Contradict a business necessity of the employer; or  
9                   d.   Impose undue hardship on the employer, based on the size of the employer's  
10                   business, the type of business, the financial resources of the employer, and  
11                   the estimated cost and extent of the accommodation.
- 12   ~~46.~~ 18.   "Sex" includes pregnancy, childbirth, and disabilities related to pregnancy or  
13                   childbirth.
- 14   ~~47.~~ 19.   "Status with regard to public assistance" means the condition of being a recipient  
15                   of federal, state, or local assistance, including medical assistance, or of being a  
16                   tenant receiving federal, state, or local subsidies, including rental assistance or rent  
17                   supplements.

18           **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 14-02.4-14 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
19 amended and reenacted as follows:

20           **14-02.4-14. Public accommodations - Discriminatory practices.**

- 21           1.   It is a discriminatory practice for a person engaged in the provision of public  
22                   accommodations to fail to provide to a person access to the use of any benefit from  
23                   the services and facilities of the public accommodations; or to give adverse,  
24                   unlawful, or unequal treatment to a person with respect to the availability to the  
25                   services and facilities, the price or other consideration therefor, the scope and  
26                   equality thereof, or the terms and conditions under which the same are made  
27                   available because of the person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age,  
28                   physical or mental disability, or status with respect to marriage or public  
29                   assistance.
- 30           2.   If a place of public accommodation has an architectural or communication barrier,  
31                   the person engaged in the provision of public accommodations shall remove the

1           barrier, if removal is readily achievable, or shall make that person's goods,  
2           services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations available through  
3           alternative methods, if those alternative methods are readily achievable.

4           **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 14-02.4-20 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6           **14-02.4-20. Relief.** If the department, as the result of an administrative hearing, or the  
7 court determines that the respondent has engaged in or is engaging in a discriminatory  
8 practice, the department or the court may enjoin the respondent from engaging in the unlawful  
9 practice and order ~~appropriate relief, which may include~~ temporary or permanent injunctions,  
10 equitable relief, and backpay limited to no more than two years from the date a minimally  
11 sufficient complaint was filed with the department or the court. Neither the department nor an  
12 administrative hearing officer may order compensatory or punitive damages under this chapter.  
13 Interim earnings or amounts earnable with reasonable diligence by the person discriminated  
14 against reduce the backpay otherwise allowable. In any action or proceeding under this  
15 chapter, the court may grant the prevailing party a reasonable attorney's fee as part of the  
16 costs. If the court finds that the complainant's allegation of a discriminatory practice is false and  
17 not made in good faith, the court shall order the complainant to pay court costs and reasonable  
18 attorney's fees incurred by the respondent in responding to the allegation.

19           **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 14-02.4-23 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
20 amended and reenacted as follows:

21           **14-02.4-23. Complaints - Probable cause - Administrative hearing.**

- 22           1. The department shall investigate complaints of alleged discriminatory practices.  
23           An aggrieved person may file a complaint with the department alleging the  
24           discriminatory practice. The department may file a complaint. A complaint must  
25           be in writing and in the form prescribed by the department.
- 26           2. ~~The~~ Unless the complaint is resolved through informal negotiations, conciliation, or  
27           is otherwise administratively closed, the department shall determine from the facts  
28           whether probable cause exists to believe that a discriminatory practice has  
29           occurred. If the department determines that no probable cause exists to believe  
30           that a discriminatory practice has occurred, the department shall promptly dismiss  
31           the complaint.

- 1           3. If the department determines that probable cause exists to believe that a  
2           discriminatory practice has occurred and is unable to resolve the complaint through  
3           informal negotiations or conciliation, the department shall provide for an  
4           administrative hearing in the manner provided in chapter 28-32 on the complaint.
- 5           4. A probable cause determination is prima facie evidence of a violation of this  
6           chapter.
- 7           5. If a claim filed by an aggrieved person proceeds to a hearing, the aggrieved person  
8           is a party in the hearing. The aggrieved person may be accompanied, advised,  
9           and represented throughout the proceeding by a representative chosen by the  
10           employee, including private counsel. Neither the department nor the attorney  
11           general may represent an aggrieved person at a hearing under this chapter. The  
12           attorney general, at the request of and on behalf of the department, may participate  
13           in the hearing and advocate in favor of the department's finding of probable cause.
- 14           6. If a claim filed by the department proceeds to a hearing, the department is a party  
15           in the hearing. The attorney general shall represent the department in any action  
16           or proceeding under this chapter.