

STATE OF NEW YORK

1158

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 7, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. PEOPLES-STOKES, COOK, GOTTFRIED, RICHARDSON --
Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. ENGLEBRIGHT -- read once and referred
to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to institution of court
actions

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assem-
bly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivision 9 of section 297 of the executive law, as
2 amended by chapter 160 of the laws of 2019, is amended to read as
3 follows:
4 9. Any person claiming to be aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory
5 practice shall have a cause of action in any court of appropriate juris-
6 diction for damages, including, in cases of employment discrimination
7 related to private employers and housing discrimination only, punitive
8 damages, and such other remedies as may be appropriate, including any
9 civil fines and penalties provided in subdivision four of this section,
10 unless such person had filed a complaint [~~hereunder~~ pursuant to this
11 section or with any local commission on human rights, or with the super-
12 intendent pursuant to the provisions of section two hundred ninety-six-a
13 of this [~~chapter,~~ article; provided that, where the division has
14 dismissed such complaint on the grounds of administrative convenience,
15 on the grounds of untimeliness, or on the grounds that the election of
16 remedies is annulled, such person shall maintain all rights to bring
17 suit as if no complaint had been filed with the division and may bring
18 such suit within three years after any such dismissal for administrative
19 convenience. At any time prior to a hearing before a hearing examiner, a
20 person who has a complaint pending at the division may request that the
21 division dismiss the complaint and annul his or her election of remedies
22 so that the human rights law claim may be pursued in court, and the
23 division may, upon such request, dismiss the complaint on the grounds
24 that such person's election of an administrative remedy is annulled.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[~~-~~] is old law to be omitted.

LBD02457-01-1

1 Notwithstanding subdivision (a) of section two hundred four of the civil
2 practice law and rules, if a complaint is so annulled by the division,
3 upon the request of the party bringing such complaint before the divi-
4 sion, such party's rights to bring such cause of action before a court
5 of appropriate jurisdiction shall be limited by the statute of limita-
6 tions in effect in such court at the time the complaint was initially
7 filed with the division. Any party to a housing discrimination complaint
8 shall have the right, within twenty days following a determination of
9 probable cause pursuant to subdivision two of this section, to elect to
10 have an action commenced in a civil court, and an attorney representing
11 the division of human rights [~~will~~] shall be appointed to present the
12 complaint in court[~~r~~] or, with the consent of the division, the case may
13 be presented by complainant's attorney. A complaint filed by the equal
14 employment opportunity commission to comply with the requirements of 42
15 USC 2000e-5(c) and 42 USC 12117(a) and 29 USC 633(b) shall not consti-
16 tute the filing of a complaint within the meaning of this subdivision.
17 No person who has initiated any action in a court of competent jurisdic-
18 tion or who has an action pending before any administrative agency under
19 any other law of the state based upon an act which would be an unlawful
20 discriminatory practice under this article, may file a complaint with
21 respect to the same grievance under this section or under section two
22 hundred ninety-six-a of this article.

23 § 2. Subdivision 9 of section 297 of the executive law, as separately
24 amended by chapter 160 of the laws of 2019 and chapter 236 of the laws
25 of 2020, is amended to read as follows:

26 9. Any person claiming to be aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory
27 practice shall have a cause of action in any court of appropriate juris-
28 diction for damages, including, in cases of employment discrimination
29 related to private employers and housing discrimination only, punitive
30 damages, and such other remedies as may be appropriate, including any
31 civil fines and penalties provided in subdivision four of this section,
32 unless such person had filed a complaint [~~hereunder~~] pursuant to this
33 section or with any local commission on human rights, or with the super-
34 intendent pursuant to the provisions of section two hundred ninety-six-a
35 of this [~~chapter~~] article; provided that, where the division has
36 dismissed such complaint on the grounds of administrative convenience,
37 on the grounds of untimeliness, or on the grounds that the election of
38 remedies is annulled, such person shall maintain all rights to bring
39 suit as if no complaint had been filed with the division and may bring
40 such suit within three years after any such dismissal for administrative
41 convenience. At any time prior to a hearing before a hearing examiner, a
42 person who has a complaint pending at the division may request that the
43 division dismiss the complaint and annul his or her election of remedies
44 so that the human rights law claim may be pursued in court, and the
45 division may, upon such request, dismiss the complaint on the grounds
46 that such person's election of an administrative remedy is annulled.
47 Notwithstanding subdivision (a) of section two hundred four of the civil
48 practice law and rules, if a complaint is so annulled by the division,
49 upon the request of the party bringing such complaint before the divi-
50 sion, such party's rights to bring such cause of action before a court
51 of appropriate jurisdiction shall be limited by the statute of limita-
52 tions in effect in such court at the time the complaint was initially
53 filed with the division. Any party to a housing discrimination complaint
54 shall have the right, within twenty days following a determination of
55 probable cause pursuant to subdivision two of this section, to elect to
56 have an action commenced in a civil court, and an attorney representing

1 the division of human rights [~~will~~] ~~shall~~ be appointed to present the
2 complaint in court[7] or, with the consent of the division, the case may
3 be presented by complainant's attorney. A complaint filed by the equal
4 employment opportunity commission to comply with the requirements of 42
5 USC 2000e-5(c) and 42 USC 12117(a) and 29 USC 633(b) shall not consti-
6 tute the filing of a complaint within the meaning of this subdivision.
7 No person who has initiated any action in a court of competent jurisdic-
8 tion or who has an action pending before any administrative agency under
9 any other law of the state based upon an act which would be an unlawful
10 discriminatory practice under this article, may file a complaint with
11 respect to the same grievance under this section or under section two
12 hundred ninety-six-a of this article. In cases of housing discrimination
13 only, a person whose complaint has been dismissed by the division after
14 investigation for lack of jurisdiction or lack of probable cause may
15 file the same cause of action in a court of appropriate jurisdiction
16 pursuant to this section, unless judicial review of such dismissal has
17 been sought pursuant to section two hundred ninety-eight of this arti-
18 cle.

19 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately; provided however that if
20 chapter 236 of the laws of 2020 shall have not yet taken effect, then
21 section two of this act shall take effect on the same date and in the
22 same manner as chapter 236 of the laws of 2020 takes effect.