

STATE OF NEW YORK

7996

IN SENATE

January 4, 2024

Introduced by Sen. PERSAUD -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Investigations and Government Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law and the labor law, in relation to prohibiting discrimination against any individual with an actual or perceived status as a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking

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

1 Section 1. Subdivision 22 of section 296 of the executive law, as
2 added by chapter 176 of the laws of 2019, is amended to read as follows:

3 22. (a) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employ-
4 er or licensing agency, because of any individual's actual or perceived
5 status as a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking to
6 refuse to hire or employ or license or to bar or to discharge from
7 employment such individual or to discriminate against such individual in
8 compensation or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment.

9 (b) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer or
10 employment agency to print or circulate or cause to be printed or circu-
11 lated any statement, advertisement or publication, or to use any form of
12 application for employment or to make any inquiry in connection with
13 prospective employment which expresses, directly or indirectly, any
14 limitation, specification or discrimination as to an actual or perceived
15 status as a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking, or
16 any intent to make any such limitation, specification or discrimination;
17 provided, however, that no provision of this subdivision shall be
18 construed to prohibit the employer from making any inquiry or obtaining
19 information for the purpose of providing assistance to, or a reasonable
20 accommodation in accordance with the provisions of this subdivision to,
21 a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking.

22 (c)(1) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer
23 to refuse to provide a reasonable accommodation to an employee who is
24 known by the employer to be a victim of domestic violence, [~~limited to~~
25 ~~those accommodations set forth in subparagraph two of this paragraph,~~

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

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1 ~~when such employee must be absent from work for a reasonable time,~~ a
2 sex offense, or stalking, where such accommodations would enable such
3 employee to satisfy the essential requisites of a job unless such
4 [~~absence~~] requested accommodations would cause an undue hardship to the
5 employer as set forth in subparagraph three of this paragraph, provided,
6 however that the employer may require an employee to charge any time off
7 pursuant to this section against any leave with pay ordinarily granted,
8 where available, unless otherwise provided for in a collective bargain-
9 ing agreement or existing employee handbook or policy, and any such
10 absence that cannot be charged may be treated as leave without pay. An
11 employee who must be absent from work in accordance with subparagraph
12 two of this paragraph shall be entitled to the continuation of any
13 health insurance coverage provided by the employer, to which the employ-
14 ee is otherwise entitled during any such absence.

15 (2) An employer is required to provide a reasonable accommodation to
16 an employee who is a victim of domestic violence [~~who must be absent~~
17 ~~from work for a reasonable time~~], a sex offense, or stalking in accord-
18 ance with the provisions of subparagraph one of this paragraph, such
19 reasonable accommodation may include, but shall not be limited to,
20 absence from work for a reasonable time for reasons including, but not
21 limited to, the following:

22 (i) Seeking medical attention for injuries caused by domestic violence
23 including for a child who is a victim of domestic violence, a sex
24 offense, or stalking, provided that the employee is not the perpetrator
25 [~~of the domestic violence~~] against the child; or

26 (ii) Obtaining services from a domestic violence shelter, program, or
27 rape crisis center as a result of domestic violence; or

28 (iii) Obtaining psychological counseling related to an incident or
29 incidents of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking, including
30 for a child who is a victim [~~of domestic violence~~], provided that the
31 employee is not the perpetrator [~~of the domestic violence~~] against the
32 child; or

33 (iv) Participating in safety planning and taking other actions to
34 increase safety from future incidents of domestic violence, a sex
35 offense, or stalking, including temporary or permanent relocation; or

36 (v) Obtaining legal services, assisting in the prosecution of the
37 offense, or appearing in court in relation to the incident or incidents
38 of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking.

39 (3) An employer is required to provide a reasonable accommodation [~~for~~
40 ~~an employee's absence~~] in accordance with the provisions of subpara-
41 graphs one and two of this paragraph unless the employer can demonstrate
42 that the employee's absence would constitute an undue hardship to the
43 employer. A determination of whether such an absence will constitute an
44 undue hardship shall include consideration of factors such as:

45 (i) The overall size of the business, program or enterprise with
46 respect to the number of employees, number and type of facilities, and
47 size of budget; and

48 (ii) The type of operation in which the business, program or enter-
49 prise is engaged, including the composition and structure of the work-
50 force.

51 (4) It shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer to
52 refuse to or otherwise fail to engage in cooperative dialogue within a
53 reasonable time with an employee who has requested a reasonable accommo-
54 dation under this section.

55 (5) An employee who must be absent from work in accordance with the
56 provisions of subparagraph one of this paragraph shall provide the

1 employer with reasonable advance notice of the employee's absence,
2 unless such advance notice is not feasible.

3 [~~(5)~~] (6) An employee who must be absent from work in accordance with
4 the provisions of subparagraph one of this paragraph and who cannot
5 feasibly give reasonable advance notice of the absence in accordance
6 with subparagraph four of this paragraph must, within a reasonable time
7 after the absence, provide a certification to the employer when
8 requested by the employer. Any person required by subparagraph one of
9 this paragraph to make reasonable accommodation may require a person
10 requesting reasonable accommodation pursuant to this paragraph to
11 provide certification that the person is a victim of domestic violence,
12 a sex offense, or stalking. Such certification shall be in the form of:

13 (i) A police [~~report~~] or court record indicating that the employee or
14 his or her child was a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense, or
15 stalking;

16 (ii) [~~A court order protecting or separating the employee or his or~~
17 ~~her child from the perpetrator of an act of domestic violence,~~

18 ~~(iii)]~~ Other corroborating evidence, including evidence from the court
19 or prosecuting attorney [~~that the employee appeared in court~~]; [~~or~~]

20 [~~(iv)]~~ (iii) Documentation from a medical professional, [~~domestic~~
21 ~~violence~~] victim services provider or advocate, health care provider,
22 cultural or religious provider, or counselor that the employee or his or
23 her child was [~~undergoing counseling or treatment for physical or mental~~
24 ~~injuries or abuse resulting in victimization from~~] obtaining assistance
25 for an act of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking; or

26 (iv) Documentation from an attorney or any other professional service
27 provider from whom the individual seeking a reasonable accommodation or
28 child has sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, a sex
29 offense, or stalking.

30 [~~(6)]~~ (7) Where an employee has a physical or mental disability
31 resulting from an incident or series of incidents of domestic violence,
32 a sex offense, or stalking, such employee shall be treated in the same
33 manner as an employee with any other disability, pursuant to the
34 provisions of this section which provide that discrimination and refusal
35 to provide reasonable accommodation of disability are unlawful discrimi-
36 natory practices.

37 (d) To the extent allowed by law, employers shall maintain the confi-
38 dentiality of any information and documentation regarding an employee's
39 status as a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense, or stalking.

40 § 2. The section heading, paragraph b of subdivision 1 and paragraph c
41 of subdivision 2 of section 201-g of the labor law, the section heading
42 and paragraph c of subdivision 2 as added by section 1 of subpart E of
43 part KK of chapter 57 of the laws of 2018 and paragraph b of subdivision
44 1 as amended by chapter 160 of the laws of 2019, are amended and two new
45 subdivisions 5 and 6 are added to read as follows:

46 Prevention of sexual harassment and responding to domestic violence,
47 sex offenses, and stalking.

48 b. Every employer shall adopt the model sexual harassment prevention
49 policy promulgated pursuant to this subdivision or establish a sexual
50 harassment prevention policy to prevent sexual harassment that equals or
51 exceeds the minimum standards provided by such model sexual harassment
52 prevention policy, which, on and after January first, two thousand twen-
53 ty-five, shall include guidance on workplace protections for victims of
54 domestic violence, sex offenses, and stalking. Such [~~sexual harassment~~
55 ~~prevention~~] policy shall be provided to all employees in writing as
56 required by subdivision two-a of this section. Such model [~~sexual~~

1 ~~harassment prevention~~] policy shall be publicly available and posted on
2 the websites of both the department and the division of human rights.

3 c. Every employer shall utilize the model sexual harassment prevention
4 training program pursuant to this subdivision or establish a training
5 program for employees to prevent sexual harassment that equals or
6 exceeds the minimum standards provided by such model training. Such
7 sexual harassment prevention training shall be provided to all employees
8 on an annual basis. On and after January first, two thousand twenty-
9 five, any such training program shall include guidance on workplace
10 protections for victims of domestic violence, sex offenses, and stalk-
11 ing.

12 5. On and after January first, two thousand twenty-five, the depart-
13 ment, in consultation with the division of human rights and the office
14 for the prevention of domestic violence, shall ensure that the model
15 sexual harassment prevention guidance document and sexual harassment
16 prevention policy includes guidance on workplace protections for victims
17 of domestic violence, sex offenses, and stalking, including language
18 that: (i) prohibits discrimination by an employer or employment agency
19 because of an employee or prospective employees status as a victim of
20 domestic violence, a sex offense or stalking in accordance with subdivi-
21 sion twenty-two of section two hundred ninety-six of the executive law;
22 and (ii) prohibits the refusal of an employer to provide a reasonable
23 accommodation to an employee known to the employer to be a victim of
24 domestic violence, a sex offense or stalking in accordance with subdivi-
25 sion twenty-two of section two hundred ninety-six of the executive law.

26 6. On and after January first, two thousand twenty-five, the annual
27 model sexual harassment training program, mandated by subdivision two of
28 this section, shall include: (i) an explanation of discrimination on the
29 basis of one's status as a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense or
30 stalking consistent with guidance issued by the department in consulta-
31 tion with the division of human rights and office for the prevention of
32 domestic violence; (ii) examples of conduct that would constitute unlaw-
33 ful discrimination because of one's status as a victim of domestic
34 violence, a sex offense or stalking; (iii) information concerning the
35 state statutory provisions concerning discrimination because of one's
36 status as a victim of domestic violence, a sex offense or stalking and
37 remedies available to victims of such discrimination; and (iv) informa-
38 tion concerning employees' rights of redress and all available forums
39 for adjudicating complaints.

40 § 3. This act shall take effect January 1, 2025. Effective immediate-
41 ly, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation
42 necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are
43 authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.