

2023 -- S 1043

LC002979

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Introduced By: Senators F. Lombardi, LaMountain, McKenney, Ujifusa, Euer, and Zurier

Date Introduced: May 19, 2023

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 28-5-7 of the General Laws in Chapter 28-5 entitled "Fair  
2 Employment Practices" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **28-5-7. Unlawful employment practices.**

4 It shall be an unlawful employment practice:

5 (1) For any employer:

6 (i) To refuse to hire any applicant for employment because of his or her race or color,  
7 religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of  
8 ancestral origin;

9 (ii) Because of those reasons, to discharge an employee or discriminate against him or her  
10 with respect to hire, tenure, compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment, or any  
11 other matter directly or indirectly related to employment. However, if an insurer or employer  
12 extends insurance-related benefits to persons other than or in addition to the named employee,  
13 nothing in this subdivision shall require those benefits to be offered to unmarried partners of named  
14 employees;

15 (iii) In the recruiting of individuals for employment or in hiring them, to utilize any  
16 employment agency, placement service, training school or center, labor organization, or any other  
17 employee referring source that the employer knows, or has reasonable cause to know, discriminates  
18 against individuals because of their race or color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity  
19 or expression, disability, age, or country of ancestral origin;

1 (iv) To refuse to reasonably accommodate an employee's or prospective employee's  
2 disability unless the employer can demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hardship on  
3 the employer's program, enterprise, or business; or

4 (v) When an employee has presented to the employer an internal complaint alleging  
5 harassment in the workplace on the basis of race or color, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual  
6 orientation, gender identity or expression, or country of ancestral origin, to refuse to disclose in a  
7 timely manner in writing to that employee the disposition of the complaint, including a description  
8 of any action taken in resolution of the complaint; provided, however, no other personnel  
9 information shall be disclosed to the complainant;

10 (2)(i) For any employment agency to fail or refuse to properly classify or refer for  
11 employment or otherwise discriminate against any individual because of his or her race or color,  
12 religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of  
13 ancestral origin; or

14 (ii) For any employment agency, placement service, training school or center, labor  
15 organization, or any other employee referring source to comply with an employer's request for the  
16 referral of job applicants if the request indicates, either directly or indirectly, that the employer will  
17 not afford full and equal employment opportunities to individuals regardless of their race or color,  
18 religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of  
19 ancestral origin;

20 (3) For any labor organization:

21 (i) To deny full and equal membership rights to any applicant for membership because of  
22 his or her race or color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability,  
23 age, or country of ancestral origin;

24 (ii) Because of those reasons, to deny a member full and equal membership rights, expel  
25 him or her from membership, or otherwise discriminate in any manner against him or her with  
26 respect to his or her hire, tenure, compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment, or  
27 any other matter directly or indirectly related to membership or employment, whether or not  
28 authorized or required by the constitution or bylaws of the labor organization or by a collective  
29 labor agreement or other contract;

30 (iii) To fail or refuse to classify properly or refer for employment, or otherwise to  
31 discriminate against any member because of his or her race or color, religion, sex, sexual  
32 orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of ancestral origin; or

33 (iv) To refuse to reasonably accommodate a member's or prospective member's disability  
34 unless the labor organization can demonstrate that the accommodation would pose a hardship on

1 the labor organization's program, enterprise, or business;

2 (4) Except where based on a bona fide occupational qualification certified by the  
3 commission or where necessary to comply with any federal mandated affirmative action programs,  
4 for any employer or employment agency, labor organization, placement service, training school or  
5 center, or any other employee referring source, prior to employment or admission to membership  
6 of any individual, to:

7 (i) Elicit, or attempt to elicit, any information directly or indirectly pertaining to his or her  
8 race or color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or  
9 country of ancestral origin;

10 (ii) Make or keep a record of his or her race or color, religion, sex, sexual orientation,  
11 gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of ancestral origin;

12 (iii) Use any form of application for employment, or personnel or membership blank  
13 containing questions or entries directly or indirectly pertaining to race or color, religion, sex, sexual  
14 orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of ancestral origin;

15 (iv) Print or publish, or cause to be printed or published, any notice or advertisement  
16 relating to employment or membership indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or  
17 discrimination based upon race or color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or  
18 expression, disability, age, or country of ancestral origin; or

19 (v) Establish, announce, or follow a policy of denying or limiting, through a quota system  
20 or otherwise, employment or membership opportunities of any group because of the race or color,  
21 religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, or country of  
22 ancestral origin of that group;

23 (5) For any employer or employment agency, labor organization, placement service,  
24 training school or center, or any other employee referring source to discriminate in any manner  
25 against any individual because he or she has opposed any practice forbidden by this chapter, or  
26 because he or she has made a charge, testified, or assisted in any manner in any investigation,  
27 proceeding, or hearing under this chapter;

28 (6) For any person, whether or not an employer, employment agency, labor organization,  
29 or employee, to directly or indirectly commit any act declared by this section to be an unlawful  
30 employment practice, or to aid, abet, incite, compel, or coerce the doing of any act declared by this  
31 section to be an unlawful employment practice, or to obstruct or prevent any person from  
32 complying with the provisions of this chapter or any order issued pursuant to this chapter, or to  
33 attempt directly or indirectly to commit any act declared by this section to be an unlawful  
34 employment practice, it being the legislative intent that individuals may be held personally liable

1 [for such conduct, including, but not limited to, employees or employers;](#)

2 (7) For any employer to include on any application for employment, except applications  
3 for law enforcement agency positions or positions related to law enforcement agencies, a question  
4 inquiring or to otherwise inquire either orally or in writing whether the applicant has ever been  
5 arrested, charged with or convicted of any crime; provided, that:

6 (i) If a federal or state law or regulation creates a mandatory or presumptive disqualification  
7 from employment based on a person's conviction of one or more specified criminal offenses, an  
8 employer may include a question or otherwise inquire whether the applicant has ever been  
9 convicted of any of those offenses; or

10 (ii) If a standard fidelity bond or an equivalent bond is required for the position for which  
11 the applicant is seeking employment and his or her conviction of one or more specified criminal  
12 offenses would disqualify the applicant from obtaining such a bond, an employer may include a  
13 question or otherwise inquire whether the applicant has ever been convicted of any of those  
14 offenses; and

15 (iii) Notwithstanding, any employer may ask an applicant for information about his or her  
16 criminal convictions at the first interview or thereafter, in accordance with all applicable state and  
17 federal laws;

18 (8)(i) For any person who or that, on June 7, 1988, is providing either by direct payment  
19 or by making contributions to a fringe benefit fund or insurance program, benefits in violation with  
20 §§ 28-5-6, 28-5-7 and 28-5-38, until the expiration of a period of one year from June 7, 1988, or if  
21 there is an applicable collective bargaining agreement in effect on June 7, 1988, until the  
22 termination of that agreement, in order to come into compliance with §§ 28-5-6, 28-5-7 and 28-5-  
23 38, to reduce the benefits or the compensation provided any employee on June 7, 1988, either  
24 directly or by failing to provide sufficient contributions to a fringe benefit fund or insurance  
25 program.

26 (ii) Where the costs of these benefits on June 7, 1988, are apportioned between employers  
27 and employees, the payments or contributions required to comply with §§ 28-5-6, 28-5-7 and 28-  
28 5-38 may be made by employers and employees in the same proportion.

29 (iii) Nothing in this section shall prevent the readjustment of benefits or compensation for  
30 reasons unrelated to compliance with §§ 28-5-6, 28-5-7 and 28-5-38.

31 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC002979  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

\*\*\*

1           This act would prohibit an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or employee  
2 from directly or indirectly committing any act declared to be an unlawful employment practice.  
3 Individual employees or employers committing any act declared to be unlawful employment  
4 practice may be held personally liable for such conduct.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC002979  
=====