

investigation regarding any conduct which the employee reasonably believes constitutes a violation of section 1341, 1343, 1344, or 1348, any rule or regulation of the Securities and Exchange Commission, or any provision of Federal law relating to fraud against shareholders, when the information or assistance is provided to or the investigation is conducted by—

(A) a Federal regulatory or law enforcement agency;

(B) any Member of Congress or any committee of Congress; or

(C) a person with supervisory authority over the employee (or such other person working for the employer who has the authority to investigate, discover, or terminate misconduct); or

(2) to file, cause to be filed, testify, participate in, or otherwise assist in a proceeding filed or about to be filed (with any knowledge of the employer) relating to an alleged violation of section 1341, 1343, 1344, or 1348, any rule or regulation of the Securities and Exchange Commission, or any provision of Federal law relating to fraud against shareholders.

(b) ENFORCEMENT ACTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A person who alleges discharge or other discrimination by any person in violation of subsection (a) may seek relief under subsection (c), by—

(A) filing a complaint with the Secretary of Labor; or

(B) if the Secretary has not issued a final decision within 180 days of the filing of the complaint and there is no showing that such delay is due to the bad faith of the claimant, bringing an action at law or equity for de novo review in the appropriate district court of the United States, which shall have jurisdiction over such an action without regard to the amount in controversy.

(2) PROCEDURE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An action under paragraph (1)(A) shall be governed under the rules and procedures set forth in section 42121(b) of title 49, United States Code.

(B) EXCEPTION.—Notification made under section 42121(b)(1) of title 49, United States Code, shall be made to the person named in the complaint and to the employer.

(C) BURDENS OF PROOF.—An action brought under paragraph (1)(B) shall be governed by the legal burdens of proof set forth in section 42121(b) of title 49, United States Code.

(D) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—An action under paragraph (1) shall be commenced not later than 180 days after the date on which the violation occurs, or after the date on which the employee became aware of the violation.

(E) JURY TRIAL.—A party to an action brought under paragraph (1)(B) shall be entitled to trial by jury.

(c) REMEDIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An employee prevailing in any action under subsection (b)(1) shall be entitled to all relief necessary to make the employee whole.

(2) COMPENSATORY DAMAGES.—Relief for any action under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) reinstatement with the same seniority status that the employee would have had, but for the discrimination;

(B) the amount of back pay, with interest; and

(C) compensation for any special damages sustained as a result of the discrimination, including litigation costs, expert witness fees, and reasonable attorney fees.

(d) RIGHTS RETAINED BY EMPLOYEE.—Nothing in this section shall be deemed to diminish the rights, privileges, or remedies of any employee under any Federal or State law, or under any collective bargaining agreement.

(e) NONENFORCEABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS WAIVING RIGHTS AND REMEDIES OR REQUIRING ARBITRATION OF DISPUTES.—

(1) WAIVER OF RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.—The rights and remedies provided for in this section may not be waived by any agreement, policy form, or condition of employment, including by a predispute arbitration agreement.

(2) PREDISPUTE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS.—No predispute arbitration agreement shall be valid or enforceable, if the agreement requires arbitration of a dispute arising under this section.

(Added Pub. L. 107–204, title VIII, §806(a), July 30, 2002, 116 Stat. 802; amended Pub. L. 111–203, title IX, §§922(b), (c), 929A, July 21, 2010, 124 Stat. 1848, 1852.)

#### AMENDMENTS

2010—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 111–203, §929A, in introductory provisions, inserted “including any subsidiary or affiliate whose financial information is included in the consolidated financial statements of such company” after “the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78o(d))”.

Pub. L. 111–203, §922(b), in introductory provisions, inserted “or nationally recognized statistical rating organization (as defined in section 3(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. 78c),” before “or any officer,” and “or nationally recognized statistical rating organization” before “, may discharge.”.

Subsec. (b)(2)(D). Pub. L. 111–203, §922(c)(1)(A), substituted “180” for “90” and inserted “, or after the date on which the employee became aware of the violation” before period at end.

Subsec. (b)(2)(E). Pub. L. 111–203, §922(c)(1)(B), added subpar. (E).

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 111–203, §922(c)(2), added subsec. (e).

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2010 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 111–203 effective 1 day after July 21, 2010, except as otherwise provided, see section 4 of Pub. L. 111–203, set out as an Effective Date note under section 5301 of Title 12, Banks and Banking.

#### § 1515. Definitions for certain provisions; general provision

(a) As used in sections 1512 and 1513 of this title and in this section—

(1) the term “official proceeding” means—

(A) a proceeding before a judge or court of the United States, a United States magistrate judge, a bankruptcy judge, a judge of the United States Tax Court, a special trial judge of the Tax Court, a judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, or a Federal grand jury;

(B) a proceeding before the Congress;

(C) a proceeding before a Federal Government agency which is authorized by law; or

(D) a proceeding involving the business of insurance whose activities affect interstate commerce before any insurance regulatory official or agency or any agent or examiner appointed by such official or agency to examine the affairs of any person engaged in the business of insurance whose activities affect interstate commerce;

(2) the term “physical force” means physical action against another, and includes confinement;

(3) the term “misleading conduct” means—

(A) knowingly making a false statement;

(B) intentionally omitting information from a statement and thereby causing a portion of such statement to be misleading, or intentionally concealing a material fact, and thereby creating a false impression by such statement;

(C) with intent to mislead, knowingly submitting or inviting reliance on a writing or recording that is false, forged, altered, or otherwise lacking in authenticity;

(D) with intent to mislead, knowingly submitting or inviting reliance on a sample, specimen, map, photograph, boundary mark, or other object that is misleading in a material respect; or

(E) knowingly using a trick, scheme, or device with intent to mislead;

(4) the term “law enforcement officer” means an officer or employee of the Federal Government, or a person authorized to act for or on behalf of the Federal Government or serving the Federal Government as an adviser or consultant—

(A) authorized under law to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of an offense; or

(B) serving as a probation or pretrial services officer under this title;

(5) the term “bodily injury” means—

(A) a cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, or disfigurement;

(B) physical pain;

(C) illness;

(D) impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or

(E) any other injury to the body, no matter how temporary; and

(6) the term “corruptly persuades” does not include conduct which would be misleading conduct but for a lack of a state of mind.

(b) As used in section 1505, the term “corruptly” means acting with an improper purpose, personally or by influencing another, including making a false or misleading statement, or withholding, concealing, altering, or destroying a document or other information.

(c) This chapter does not prohibit or punish the providing of lawful, bona fide, legal representation services in connection with or anticipation of an official proceeding.

(Added Pub. L. 97-291, §4(a), Oct. 12, 1982, 96 Stat. 1252; amended Pub. L. 99-646, §50(b), Nov. 10, 1986,

100 Stat. 3605; Pub. L. 100-690, title VII, §7029(b), (d), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4398; Pub. L. 101-650, title III, §321, Dec. 1, 1990, 104 Stat. 5117; Pub. L. 102-572, title IX, §902(b)(1), Oct. 29, 1992, 106 Stat. 4516; Pub. L. 103-322, title XXXII, §320604(a), Sept. 13, 1994, 108 Stat. 2118; Pub. L. 104-292, §3, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3460; Pub. L. 104-294, title VI, §604(b)(39), Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3509.)

#### AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (a)(1)(D). Pub. L. 104-294 struck out “or” after semicolon at end.

Subsecs. (b), (c). Pub. L. 104-292 added subsec. (b) and redesignated former subsec. (b) as (c).

1994—Subsec. (a)(1)(D). Pub. L. 103-322 added subpar. (D).

1992—Subsec. (a)(1)(A). Pub. L. 102-572 substituted “United States Court of Federal Claims” for “United States Claims Court”.

1988—Subsec. (a)(1)(A). Pub. L. 100-690, §7029(b), inserted “a judge of the United States Tax Court, a special trial judge of the Tax Court, a judge of the United States Claims Court,” after “bankruptcy judge.”

Subsec. (a)(6). Pub. L. 100-690, §7029(d), added par. (6).

1986—Pub. L. 99-646 inserted “; general provision” in section catchline, designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), and added subsec. (b).

#### CHANGE OF NAME

“United States magistrate judge” substituted for “United States magistrate” in subsec. (a)(1)(A) pursuant to section 321 of Pub. L. 101-650, set out as a note under section 631 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 104-294 effective Sept. 13, 1994, see section 604(d) of Pub. L. 104-294, set out as a note under section 13 of this title.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1992 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 102-572 effective Oct. 29, 1992, see section 911 of Pub. L. 102-572, set out as a note under section 171 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Oct. 12, 1982, see section 9(a) of Pub. L. 97-291, set out as a note under section 1512 of this title.

### § 1516. Obstruction of Federal audit

(a) Whoever, with intent to deceive or defraud the United States, endeavors to influence, obstruct, or impede a Federal auditor in the performance of official duties relating to a person, entity, or program receiving in excess of \$100,000, directly or indirectly, from the United States in any 1 year period under a contract or subcontract, grant, or cooperative agreement, or relating to any property that is security for a mortgage note that is insured, guaranteed, acquired, or held by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development pursuant to any Act administered by the Secretary, or relating to any property that is security for a loan that is made or guaranteed under title V of the Housing Act of 1949, shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.

(b) For purposes of this section—

(1) the term “Federal auditor” means any person employed on a full- or part-time or contractual basis to perform an audit or a quality assurance inspection for or on behalf of the United States; and