

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5692

To restore the effective use of group actions for claims arising under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, section 1977 of the Revised Statutes, and the Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act of 2008, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 8, 2016

Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. LEE, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. SCHIFF, and Ms. JUDY CHU of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To restore the effective use of group actions for claims arising under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, section 1977 of the Revised Statutes, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Equal Employment
5 Opportunity Restoration Act of 2016”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Congress has enacted laws to eradicate
4 workplace discrimination and to secure equal em-
5 ployment opportunities for all Americans, as noted
6 in *Teamsters v. United States*, 431 U.S. 324 (1977)
7 and *McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green*, 411 U.S.
8 792 (1973) (stating that civil rights laws are meant
9 “to assure equality of employment opportunities and
10 to eliminate . . . discriminatory practices and de-
11 vices” in the workplace).

12 (2) Workplace discrimination laws prohibit sub-
13 jective employment practices that operate to deny
14 equal employment opportunities to employees, as ex-
15 plained in *Watson v. Fort Worth Bank & Trust*, 487
16 U.S. 977 (1988), which stated that personnel deci-
17 sions “based on the exercise of personal judgment or
18 the application of inherently subjective criteria” are
19 unlawful when the personnel decisions have the ef-
20 fect of discriminating on grounds prohibited by law.

21 (3) Class actions often have been the most ef-
22 fective means to enforce employment discrimination
23 laws, as explained in *East Texas Motor Freight Sys-
24 tem Inc. v. Rodriguez*, 431 U.S. 395 (1977)
25 (“[S]uits alleging . . . discrimination are often by
26 their very nature class suits, involving classwide

wrongs” where “[c]ommon questions of law or fact are typically present.”) and in *Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin*, 417 U.S. 156 (1974) (“Economic reality dictates that [claims of relatively small value] proceed as a class action or not at all.”).

(4) Historically, a class action alleging employment discrimination could be maintained if the class was united by a common issue of law or fact. As a leading legal treatise, William B. Rubenstein, 1 *Newberg on Class Actions* § 3:20 (5th ed. 2011), explained, “this requirement [was] easily met in most cases”. As another leading treatise, Charles A. Wright et al., 7A *Federal Practice and Procedure*, Wright and Miller § 1763 (3rd ed. 2005), explained, this requirement had been given “permissive application”.

(5) However, the Supreme Court recently made it more difficult for victims of discrimination to vindicate claims for their rights. In *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes*, 131 S. Ct. 2541 (2011), the Court required “convincing proof of a companywide discriminatory pay and promotion policy” as a prerequisite to class certification. In a dissent in that case, Justice Ginsberg wrote that the Court’s decision “disqualifies the class at the starting gate”.

1 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to restore
 2 employees’ ability to challenge, as a group, discriminatory
 3 employment practices, including subjective employment
 4 practices.

5 **SEC. 3. GROUP ACTIONS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Part VI of title 28, United States
 7 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

8 **“CHAPTER 182—GROUP ACTIONS**

“Sec.

“4201. Group actions in certain employment discrimination cases.

9 **“§ 4201. Group actions in certain employment dis-**
 10 **crimination cases**

11 “(a) GROUP ACTIONS.—In seeking relief under title
 12 VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et
 13 seq.), title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
 14 (42 U.S.C. 12111 et seq.), title V of the Rehabilitation
 15 Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791 et seq.), section 1977 of the
 16 Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981), or title II of the Ge-
 17 netic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (42
 18 U.S.C. 2000ff et seq.) (individually referred to in this sec-
 19 tion as a ‘covered employment statute’), one or more mem-
 20 bers (collectively referred to in this section as the ‘rep-
 21 resentative party’) of a group may sue on behalf of all
 22 members of the group if the representative party shows,
 23 by a reasonable inference, that—

1 “(1) the members of the group are so numerous
2 that their joinder is impracticable;

3 “(2) the claims of the representative party are
4 typical of the claims of the group the representative
5 party seeks to represent and the representative party
6 and the representative party’s counsel will fairly and
7 adequately protect the interests of the group; and

8 “(3) the members of the group are, or have
9 been, subject to an employment practice that has ad-
10 versely affected or is adversely affecting a significant
11 portion of the group’s members.

12 “(b) SUBJECTIVE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES.—

13 “(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term
14 ‘subjective employment practice’ means—

15 “(A) an employer’s policy of leaving per-
16 sonnel decisions to the unguided discretion of
17 supervisors, managers, and other employees
18 with authority to make such personnel deci-
19 sions; or

20 “(B) an employment practice that com-
21 bines a subjective employment practice, as de-
22 fined in subparagraph (A), with other types of
23 personnel decisions.

24 “(2) CHALLENGES.—A representative party
25 may challenge a subjective employment practice cov-

1 ered by a covered employment statute in a group ac-
2 tion filed under this section to the same extent as
3 the party may challenge any other employment prac-
4 tice covered by the covered employment statute in
5 such an action.

6 “(3) EXERCISE OF DISCRETION IN DIFFERENT
7 WAYS.—The fact that individual supervisors, man-
8 agers, or other employees with authority to make
9 personnel decisions may exercise discretion in dif-
10 ferent ways in applying a subjective employment
11 practice under the covered employment statute shall
12 not preclude a representative party from filing a cor-
13 responding group action under this section.

14 “(4) CONSIDERATION OF WRITTEN NON-
15 DISCRIMINATION POLICY.—In determining whether
16 to certify a group action challenging an employment
17 practice, the court may consider as evidence, in op-
18 position to certification, an employer’s written non-
19 discrimination policy only to the extent that the em-
20 ployer demonstrates that the policy has been consist-
21 ently and effectively used to prevent and, where nec-
22 essary, promptly correct discrimination against the
23 group.

24 “(c) RELATIONSHIP TO RULE 23 OF THE FEDERAL
25 RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE.—

1 “(1) ELECTION OF PROCEDURE.—The rep-
2 resentative party may elect to proceed in a group ac-
3 tion under this section or in a class action under
4 rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. This
5 election shall occur not later than the latest date on
6 which the representative party may petition for class
7 certification under rule 23 of the Federal Rules of
8 Civil Procedure.

9 “(2) RULE 23 REQUIREMENTS.—To the extent
10 consistent with this section, the court shall apply the
11 provisions of rule 23(c) through rule 23(h) of the
12 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, including the re-
13 quirements under rule 23 regarding notice and re-
14 quests for exclusion, to claims brought pursuant to
15 this section.

16 “(3) INTERLOCUTORY APPELLATE REVIEW.—
17 Decisions granting or denying certification of claims
18 as group actions under this section are subject to re-
19 view to the same extent as orders granting or deny-
20 ing class certification pursuant to rule 23 of the
21 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

22 “(4) CLASS ACTION FAIRNESS ACT.—Group ac-
23 tions certified under this section shall be subject to
24 section 1332(d), section 1453, and chapter 114 to

1 the same extent as class actions certified pursuant
2 to rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

3 “(5) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
4 this section shall be construed to create any infer-
5 ence regarding the standards for determining wheth-
6 er claims may be adjudicated together under any law
7 other than the covered employment statutes.

8 “(d) REMEDIES.—

9 “(1) AVAILABILITY OF REMEDIES.—If an em-
10 ployer has been found liable under a covered employ-
11 ment statute against a group certified under this
12 section, the court may deny a remedy available
13 under the covered employment statute to a member
14 of the group only if the employer demonstrates, by
15 a preponderance of the evidence, that the member of
16 the group would not have received the corresponding
17 employment opportunity or benefit even in the ab-
18 sence of a violation of the covered employment stat-
19 ute.

20 “(2) RELIEF.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The court shall fash-
22 ion the most complete relief possible for mem-
23 bers of a prevailing group described in this sec-
24 tion and shall have broad discretion in deter-
25 mining how to fashion that relief.

“(B) EXERCISE OF DISCRETION.—In exercising its discretion under this paragraph, the court shall—

“(i) use such procedures as the interests of justice warrant, which procedures may include economic or statistical modeling, mathematical calculation, sampling, individual adjudication, and other means the court may adopt;

“(ii) consider which procedure will best ensure that members of the group will be made whole;

“(iii) consider which procedure will best minimize the cost to and burden on the parties; and

“(iv) consider which procedure most reliably and efficiently accounts for limitations on the court’s ability to identify individual members of the group and to measure the harm incurred by individual members of the group.”.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—

The table of chapters for part VI of title 28, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“182. Group actions 4201”.

