

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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SENATE BILL 1534

Short Title: Nondiscrimination in State Employment. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Albertson, Dorsett; Atwater, Berger of Franklin, Bingham, Boseman, Clodfelter, Cowell, Dannelly, Garrou, Graham, Hagan, Hoyle, Jenkins, Jones, Kinnaid, Malone, Nesbitt, Purcell, and Weinstein.

Referred to: Judiciary I (Civil).

March 28, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT AMENDING THE NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY PROVISIONS OF THE STATE PERSONNEL ACT TO COVER
SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND CLARIFYING THE PERSONNEL POLICIES
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Article 7 of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 120-32.04. Legislative personnel nondiscrimination policy.

The General Assembly shall not discriminate in any of its personnel policies, practices, or benefits on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability."

SECTION 2. G.S. 126-16 reads as rewritten:

"§ 126-16. Equal opportunity for employment and compensation by State departments and agencies and local political subdivisions.

All State departments and agencies and all local political subdivisions of North Carolina shall give equal opportunity for employment and compensation, without regard to race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition as defined in G.S. 168A-3 to all persons otherwise qualified, except where specific age, sex or physical requirements constitute bona fide occupational qualifications necessary to proper and efficient administration. This section with respect to equal opportunity as to age shall be limited to individuals who are at least 40 years of age."

SECTION 3. G.S. 126-34.1 reads as rewritten:

"§ 126-34.1. Grounds for contested case under the State Personnel Act defined.

1 (a) A State employee or former State employee may file in the Office of
2 Administrative Hearings a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the
3 General Statutes only as to the following personnel actions or issues:

- 4 (1) Dismissal, demotion, or suspension without pay based upon an alleged
5 violation of G.S. 126-35, if the employee is a career State employee.
- 6 (2) An alleged unlawful State employment practice constituting
7 discrimination, as proscribed by G.S. 126-36, including:
 - 8 a. Denial of promotion, transfer, or training, on account of the
9 employee's age, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed,
10 political affiliation, sexual orientation, or handicapping
11 condition as defined by Chapter 168A of the General Statutes.
 - 12 b. Demotion, reduction in force, or termination of an employee in
13 retaliation for the employee's opposition to alleged
14 discrimination on account of the employee's age, sex, race,
15 color, national origin, religion, creed, political affiliation, sexual
16 orientation, or handicapping condition as defined by Chapter
17 168A of the General Statutes.
- 18 (3) Retaliation against an employee, as proscribed by G.S. 126-17, for
19 protesting an alleged violation of G.S. 126-16.
- 20 (4) Denial of the veteran's preference granted in accordance with Article
21 13 of this Chapter in initial State employment or in connection with a
22 reduction in force, for an eligible veteran as defined by G.S. 126-81.
- 23 (5) Denial of promotion for failure to post or failure to give priority
24 consideration for promotion or reemployment, to a career State
25 employee as required by G.S. 126-7.1 and G.S. 126-36.2.
- 26 (6) Denial of an employee's request for removal of allegedly inaccurate or
27 misleading information from the employee's personnel file as provided
28 by G.S. 126-25.
- 29 (7) Any retaliatory personnel action that violates G.S. 126-85.
- 30 (8) Denial of promotion in violation of G.S. 126-14.2, where an initial
31 determination found probable cause to believe there has been a
32 violation of G.S. 126-14.2.
- 33 (9) Denial of employment in violation of G.S. 126-14.2, where an initial
34 determination found probable cause to believe that there has been a
35 violation of G.S. 126-14.2.
- 36 (10) Harassment in the workplace based upon age, sex, race, color, national
37 origin, religion, creed, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition,
38 whether the harassment is based upon the creation of a hostile work
39 environment or upon a quid pro quo.
- 40 (11) Violation of any of the following federal statutes as applied to the
41 employee:
 - 42 a. The Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201, et seq.
 - 43 b. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. § 621,
44 et seq.

1 c. The Family Medical Leave Act, 29 U.S.C. § 2601, et seq.
2 d. The Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.
3 (b) An applicant for initial State employment may file in the Office of
4 Administrative Hearings a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the
5 General Statutes based upon:

- 6 (1) Alleged denial of employment in violation of G.S. 126-16.
7 (2) Denial of the applicant's request for removal of allegedly inaccurate or
8 misleading information from the personnel file as provided by
9 G.S. 126-25.
10 (3) Denial of equal opportunity for employment and compensation on
11 account of the employee's age, sex, race, color, national origin,
12 religion, creed, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or handicapping
13 condition as defined by Chapter 168A of the General Statutes. This
14 subsection with respect to equal opportunity as to age shall be limited
15 to persons who are at least 40 years of age. An applicant may not,
16 however, file a contested case where political affiliation was the reason
17 for the person's nonselection for (i) an exempt policymaking position
18 as defined in G.S. 126-5(b)(3), (ii) a chief deputy or chief
19 administrative assistant position under G.S. 126-5(c)(4), or (iii) a
20 confidential assistant or confidential secretary position under
21 G.S. 126-5(c)(2).
22 (4) Denial of the veteran's preference in initial State employment provided
23 by Article 13 of this Chapter, for an eligible veteran as defined by
24 G.S. 126-81.
25 (5) Denial of employment in violation of G.S. 126-14.2, where an initial
26 determination found probable cause to believe that there has been a
27 violation of G.S. 126-14.2.

28 (c) In the case of a dispute as to whether a State employee's position is properly
29 exempted from the State Personnel Act under G.S. 126-5, the employee may file in the
30 Office of Administrative Hearings a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of
31 the General Statutes.

32 (d) A State employee or applicant for State employment may file in the Office of
33 Administrative Hearings a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the
34 General Statutes based upon a false accusation regarding, or disciplinary action relating
35 to, the employee's alleged violation of G.S. 126-14 or G.S. 126-14.1.

36 (e) Any issue for which appeal to the State Personnel Commission through the
37 filing of a contested case under Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes has
38 not been specifically authorized by this section shall not be grounds for a contested case
39 under Chapter 126."

40 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 126-36 reads as rewritten:

41 **"§ 126-36. Appeal of unlawful State employment practice.**

42 (a) Any State employee or former State employee who has reason to believe that
43 employment, promotion, training, or transfer was denied the employee or that demotion,
44 layoff, transfer, or termination of employment was forced upon the employee in

1 retaliation for opposition to alleged discrimination or because of the employee's age,
2 sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, political affiliation, sexual orientation,
3 or handicapping condition as defined by G.S. 168A-3 except where specific age, sex or
4 physical requirements constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to
5 proper and efficient administration, shall have the right to appeal directly to the State
6 Personnel Commission.

7 (b) Subject to the requirements of G.S. 126-34, any State employee or former
8 State employee who has reason to believe that the employee has been subjected to any
9 of the following shall have the right to appeal directly to the State Personnel
10 Commission:

11 (1) Harassment in the workplace based upon age, sex, race, color, national
12 origin, religion, creed, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition,
13 whether the harassment is based upon the creation of a hostile work
14 environment or upon a quid pro quo.

15 (2) Retaliation for opposition to harassment in the workplace based upon
16 age, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, or handicapping
17 condition, whether the harassment is based upon the creation of a
18 hostile work environment or upon a quid pro quo."

19 **SECTION 5.** G.S. 12-3 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

20 "(14) 'Sexual orientation.' – The phrase 'sexual orientation' means actual or
21 perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, or bisexuality, or a person's
22 gender-related identity or expression."

23 **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.