

## 11.3: The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

The following is the text of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (Pub. L. 90-202) (ADEA), as amended, as it appears in volume 29 of the United States Code, beginning at section 621. The ADEA prohibits employment discrimination against persons 40 years of age or older. The Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (Pub. L. 101-433) amended several sections of the ADEA. In addition, section 115 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 (P.L. 102-166) amended section 7(e) of the ADEA (29 U.S.C. 626(e)). Cross-references to the ADEA as enacted appear in italics following each section heading. Editor's notes also appear in italics.

An Act

To prohibit age discrimination in employment.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that this Act may be cited as the "Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967."

\* \* \*

### Congressional Statement of Findings and Purpose

SEC. 621. *[Section 2]*

- a. The Congress hereby finds and declares that-
  1. in the face of rising productivity and affluence, older workers find themselves disadvantaged in their efforts to retain employment, and especially to regain employment when displaced from jobs;
  2. the setting of arbitrary age limits regardless of potential for job performance has become a common practice, and certain otherwise desirable practices may work to the disadvantage of older persons;
  3. the incidence of unemployment, especially long-term unemployment with resultant deterioration of skill, morale, and employer acceptability is, relative to the younger ages, high among older workers; their numbers are great and growing; and their employment problems grave;
  4. the existence in industries affecting commerce, of arbitrary discrimination in employment because of age, burdens commerce and the free flow of goods in commerce.
- b. It is therefore the purpose of this chapter to promote employment of older persons based on their ability rather than age; to prohibit arbitrary age discrimination in employment; to help employers and workers find ways of meeting problems arising from the impact of age on employment.

### Education and Research Program; Recommendation to Congress

SEC. 622. *[Section 3]*

- a. The EEOC *[originally, the Secretary of Labor]* shall undertake studies and provide information to labor unions, management, and the general public concerning the needs and abilities of older workers, and their potentials for continued employment and contribution to the economy. In order to achieve the purposes of this chapter, the EEOC *[originally, the Secretary of Labor]* shall carry on a continuing program of education and information, under which he may, among other measures-
  1. undertake research, and promote research, with a view to reducing barriers to the employment of older persons, and the promotion of measures for utilizing their skills;
  2. publish and otherwise make available to employers, professional societies, the various media of communication, and other interested persons the findings of studies and other materials for the promotion of employment;
  3. foster through the public employment service system and through cooperative effort the development of facilities of public and private agencies for expanding the opportunities and potentials of older persons;
  4. sponsor and assist State and community informational and educational programs.
- b. Not later than six months after the effective date of this chapter, the Secretary shall recommend to the Congress any measures he may deem desirable to change the lower or upper age limits set forth in section 631 of this title *[section 12]*.

## Prohibition of Age Discrimination

### SEC. 623. [Section 4]

- a. Employer practices
  - It shall be unlawful for an employer-
    - 1. to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's age;
    - 2. to limit, segregate, or classify his employees in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's age; or
    - 3. to reduce the wage rate of any employee in order to comply with this chapter.
- b. It shall be unlawful for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of such individual's age, or to classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of such individual's age.
- c. Labor organization practices
  - It shall be unlawful for a labor organization-
    - 1. to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of his age;
    - 2. to limit, segregate, or classify its membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities, or would limit such employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee or as an applicant for employment, because of such individual's age;
    - 3. to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.
- d. Opposition to unlawful practices; participation in investigations, proceedings, or litigation
  - It shall be unlawful for an employer to discriminate against any of his employees or applicants for employment, for an employment agency to discriminate against any individual, or for a labor organization to discriminate against any member thereof or applicant for membership, because such individual, member or applicant for membership has opposed any practice made unlawful by this section, or because such individual, member or applicant for membership has made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or litigation under this chapter.
- e. Printing or publication of notice or advertisement indicating preference, limitation, etc.
  - It shall be unlawful for an employer, labor organization, or employment agency to print or publish, or cause to be printed or published, any notice or advertisement relating to employment by such an employer or membership in or any classification or referral for employment by such a labor organization, or relating to any classification or referral for employment by such an employment agency, indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination, based on age.
- f. Lawful practices; age an occupational qualification; other reasonable factors; laws of foreign workplace; seniority system; employee benefit plans; discharge or discipline for good cause
  - It shall not be unlawful for an employer, employment agency, or labor organization-
    - 1. to take any action otherwise prohibited under subsections (a), (b), (c), or (e) of this section where age is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the particular business, or where the differentiation is based on reasonable factors other than age, or where such practices involve an employee in a workplace in a foreign country, and compliance with such subsections would cause such employer, or a corporation controlled by such employer, to violate the laws of the country in which such workplace is located;
    - 2. to take any action otherwise prohibited under subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of this section—
      - a. to observe the terms of a bona fide seniority system that is not intended to evade the purposes of this chapter, except that no such seniority system shall require or permit the involuntary retirement of any individual specified by section 631(a) of this title because of the age of such individual; or
      - b. to observe the terms of a bona fide employee benefit plan-
        - i. where, for each benefit or benefit package, the actual amount of payment made or cost incurred on behalf of an older worker is no less than that made or incurred on behalf of a younger worker, as permissible under section 1625.10, title 29, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on June 22, 1989); or
        - ii. that is a voluntary early retirement incentive plan consistent with the relevant purpose or purposes of this chapter.

- Notwithstanding clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (B), no such employee benefit plan or voluntary early retirement incentive plan shall excuse the failure to hire any individual, and no such employee benefit plan shall require or permit the involuntary retirement of any individual specified by section 631(a) of this title, because of the age of such individual. An employer, employment agency, or labor organization acting under subparagraph (A), or under clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (B), shall have the burden of proving that such actions are lawful in any civil enforcement proceeding brought under this chapter; or

3. to discharge or otherwise discipline an individual for good cause.

g. *[Repealed]*

h. Practices of foreign corporations controlled by American employers; foreign employers not controlled by American employers; factors determining control

1. If an employer controls a corporation whose place of incorporation is in a foreign country, any practice by such corporation prohibited under this section shall be presumed to be such practice by such employer.
2. The prohibitions of this section shall not apply where the employer is a foreign person not controlled by an American employer.
3. For the purpose of this subsection the determination of whether an employer controls a corporation shall be based upon the
  - A. interrelation of operations,
  - B. common management,
  - C. centralized control of labor relations, and
  - D. common ownership or financial control,

of the employer and the corporation.

i. Employee pension benefit plans; cessation or reduction of benefit accrual or of allocation to employee account; distribution of benefits after attainment of normal retirement age; compliance; highly compensated employees

1. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, it shall be unlawful for an employer, an employment agency, a labor organization, or any combination thereof to establish or maintain an employee pension benefit plan which requires or permits—
    - A. in the case of a defined benefit plan, the cessation of an employee's benefit accrual, or the reduction of the rate of an employee's benefit accrual, because of age, or
    - B. in the case of a defined contribution plan, the cessation of allocations to an employee's account, or the reduction of the rate at which amounts are allocated to an employee's account, because of age.
  2. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit an employer, employment agency, or labor organization from observing any provision of an employee pension benefit plan to the extent that such provision imposes (without regard to age) a limitation on the amount of benefits that the plan provides or a limitation on the number of years of service or years of participation which are taken into account for purposes of determining benefit accrual under the plan.
  3. In the case of any employee who, as of the end of any plan year under a defined benefit plan, has attained normal retirement age under such plan—
    - A. if distribution of benefits under such plan with respect to such employee has commenced as of the end of such plan year, then any requirement of this subsection for continued accrual of benefits under such plan with respect to such employee during such plan year shall be treated as satisfied to the extent of the actuarial equivalent of in-service distribution of benefits, and
    - B. if distribution of benefits under such plan with respect to such employee has not commenced as of the end of such year in accordance with section 1056(a)(3) of this title [*section 206(a)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974*] and section 401(a)(14)(C) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*], and the payment of benefits under such plan with respect to such employee is not suspended during such plan year pursuant to section 1053(a)(3)(B) of this title or section 411(a)(3)(B) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*], then any requirement of this subsection for continued accrual of benefits under such plan with respect to such employee during such plan year shall be treated as satisfied to the extent of any adjustment in the benefit payable under the plan during such plan year attributable to the delay in the distribution of benefits after the attainment of normal retirement age.
- The provisions of this paragraph shall apply in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury. Such regulations shall provide for the application of the preceding provisions of this paragraph to all employee pension benefit

plans subject to this subsection and may provide for the application of such provisions, in the case of any such employee, with respect to any period of time within a plan year.

4. Compliance with the requirements of this subsection with respect to an employee pension benefit plan shall constitute compliance with the requirements of this section relating to benefit accrual under such plan.
5. Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to any employee who is a highly compensated employee (within the meaning of section 414(q) of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986]) to the extent provided in regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury for purposes of precluding discrimination in favor of highly compensated employees within the meaning of subchapter D of chapter 1 of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986].
6. A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1) solely because the subsidized portion of any early retirement benefit is disregarded in determining benefit accruals or it is a plan permitted by subsection (m) of this section.
7. Any regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to clause (v) of section 411(b)(1)(H) of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986] and subparagraphs (C) and (D), of section 411(b)(2) of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986] shall apply with respect to the requirements of this subsection in the same manner and to the same extent as such regulations apply with respect to the requirements of such sections 411(b)(1)(H) and 411(b)(2).
8. A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of this section solely because such plan provides a normal retirement age described in section 1002(24)(B) [section 2(24)(B) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974] of this title and section 411(a)(8)(B) of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986].
9. For purposes of this subsection-
  - A. The terms "employee pension benefit plan", "defined benefit plan", "defined contribution plan", and "normal retirement age" have the meanings provided such terms in section 1002 of this title [section 3 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974].
  - B. The term "compensation" has the meaning provided by section 414(s) of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986].
10. Special rules relating to age
  - A. Comparison to similarly situated younger individual
    - i. In general—A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1) if a participant's accrued benefit, as determined as of any date under the terms of the plan, would be equal to or greater than that of any similarly situated, younger individual who is or could be a participant.
    - ii. Similarly situated—For purposes of this subparagraph, a participant is similarly situated to any other individual if such participant is identical to such other individual in every respect (including period of service, compensation, position, date of hire, work history, and any other respect) except for age.
    - iii. Disregard of subsidized early retirement benefits—In determining the accrued benefit as of any date for purposes of this clause, the subsidized portion of any early retirement benefit or retirement-type subsidy shall be disregarded.
    - iv. Accrued benefit—For purposes of this subparagraph, the accrued benefit may, under the terms of the plan, be expressed as an annuity payable at normal retirement age, the balance of a hypothetical account, or the current value of the accumulated percentage of the employee's final average compensation.
  - B. Applicable defined benefit plans
    - i. Interest credits
      - I. In general—An applicable defined benefit plan shall be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1) unless the terms of the plan provide that any interest credit (or an equivalent amount) for any plan year shall be at a rate which is not greater than a market rate of return. A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of this subclause merely because the plan provides for a reasonable minimum guaranteed rate of return or for a rate of return that is equal to the greater of a fixed or variable rate of return
      - II. Preservation of capital—An interest credit (or an equivalent amount) of less than zero shall in no event result in the account balance or similar amount being less than the aggregate amount of contributions credited to the account.
      - III. Market rate of return—The Secretary of the Treasury may provide by regulation for rules governing the calculation of a market rate of return for purposes of subclause (I) and for permissible methods of crediting interest to the account (including fixed or variable interest rates) resulting in effective rates of return meeting the requirements of subclause (I). In the case of a governmental plan (as defined in the first sentence of section 414(d) of Title 26 [the Internal Revenue Code of 1986], a rate of return or a method of crediting interest established

- pursuant to any provision of Federal, State, or local law (including any administrative rule or policy adopted in accordance with any such law) shall be treated as a market rate of return for purposes of subclause (I) and a permissible method of crediting interest for purposes of meeting the requirements of subclause (I), except that this sentence shall only apply to a rate of return or method of crediting interest if such rate or method does not violate any other requirement of this chapter.
- ii. Special rule for plan conversions—If, after June 29, 2005, an applicable plan amendment is adopted, the plan shall be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1)(H) unless the requirements of clause (iii) are met with respect to each individual who was a participant in the plan immediately before the adoption of the amendment.
  - iii. Rate of benefit accrual—Subject to clause (iv), the requirements of this clause are met with respect to any participant if the accrued benefit of the participant under the terms of the plan as in effect after the amendment is not less than the sum of—
    - I. the participant's accrued benefit for years of service before the effective date of the amendment, determined under the terms of the plan as in effect before the amendment, plus
    - II. the participant's accrued benefit for years of service after the effective date of the amendment, determined under the terms of the plan as in effect after the amendment.
  - iv. Special rules for early retirement subsidies—For purposes of clause (iii)(I), the plan shall credit the accumulation account or similar amount with the amount of any early retirement benefit or retirement-type subsidy for the plan year in which the participant retires if, as of such time, the participant has met the age, years of service, and other requirements under the plan for entitlement to such benefit or subsidy.
  - v. Applicable plan amendment—For purposes of this subparagraph—
    - I. In general—The term "applicable plan amendment" means an amendment to a defined benefit plan which has the effect of converting the plan to an applicable defined benefit plan.
    - II. Special rule for coordinated benefits—If the benefits of 2 or more defined benefit plans established or maintained by an employer are coordinated in such a manner as to have the effect of the adoption of an amendment described in subclause (I), the sponsor of the defined benefit plan or plans providing for such coordination shall be treated as having adopted such a plan amendment as of the date such coordination begins.
    - III. Multiple amendments—The Secretary of the Treasury shall issue regulations to prevent the avoidance of the purposes of this subparagraph through the use of 2 or more plan amendments rather than a single amendment.
    - IV. Applicable defined benefit plan—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "applicable defined benefit plan" has the meaning given such term by section 1053(f)(3) of this title [*section 203(f)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974*].
  - vi. Termination requirements—An applicable defined benefit plan shall not be treated as meeting the requirements of clause (i) unless the plan provides that, upon the termination of the plan—
    - I. if the interest credit rate (or an equivalent amount) under the plan is a variable rate, the rate of interest used to determine accrued benefits under the plan shall be equal to the average of the rates of interest used under the plan during the 5-year period ending on the termination date, and
    - II. the interest rate and mortality table used to determine the amount of any benefit under the plan payable in the form of an annuity payable at normal retirement age shall be the rate and table specified under the plan for such purpose as of the termination date, except that if such interest rate is a variable rate, the interest rate shall be determined under the rules of subclause (I).
  - C. Certain offsets permitted—A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1) solely because the plan provides offsets against benefits under the plan to the extent such offsets are allowable in applying the requirements of section 401(a) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*].
  - D. Permitted disparities in plan contributions or benefits—A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1) solely because the plan provides a disparity in contributions or benefits with respect to which the requirements of section 401(l) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*] are met.
  - E. Indexing permitted—
    - i. In general—A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of paragraph (1) solely because the plan provides for indexing of accrued benefits under the plan.
    - ii. Protection against loss—Except in the case of any benefit provided in the form of a variable annuity, clause (i) shall not apply with respect to any indexing which results in an accrued benefit less than the accrued benefit determined

without regard to such indexing.

iii. Indexing—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "indexing" means, in connection with an accrued benefit, the periodic adjustment of the accrued benefit by means of the application of a recognized investment index or methodology.

F. Early retirement benefit or retirement-type subsidy—For purposes of this paragraph, the terms "early retirement benefit" and "retirement-type subsidy" have the meaning given such terms in section 1053(g)(2)(A) of this title [*section 203(g)(2)(A) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974*].

G. Benefit accrued to date—For purposes of this paragraph, any reference to the accrued benefit shall be a reference to such benefit accrued to date.

j. Employment as firefighter or law enforcement officer

- o It shall not be unlawful for an employer which is a State, a political subdivision of a State, an agency or instrumentality of a State or a political subdivision of a State, or an interstate agency to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual because of such individual's age if such action is taken-

1. with respect to the employment of an individual as a firefighter or as a law enforcement officer, the employer has complied with section 3(d)(2) of the Age Discrimination in Employment Amendments of 1996 if the individual was discharged after the date described in such section, and the individual has attained-

- A. the age of hiring or retirement, respectively, in effect under applicable State or local law on March 3, 1983; or

- B. i. if the individual was not hired, the age of hiring in effect on the date of such failure or refusal to hire under applicable State or local law enacted after September 30, 1996; or

- ii. if applicable State or local law was enacted after September 30, 1996, and the individual was discharged, the higher of-

- I. the age of retirement in effect on the date of such discharge under such law; and

- II. age 55; and

2. pursuant to a bona fide hiring or retirement plan that is not a subterfuge to evade the purposes of this chapter.

k. Seniority system or employee benefit plan; compliance

- o A seniority system or employee benefit plan shall comply with this chapter regardless of the date of adoption of such system or plan.

l. Lawful practices; minimum age as condition of eligibility for retirement benefits; deductions from severance pay; reduction of long-term disability benefits

- o Notwithstanding clause (i) or (ii) of subsection (f)(2)(B) of this section-

1. A. It shall not be a violation of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of this section solely because-

- i. an employee pension benefit plan (as defined in section 1002(2) of this title [*section 2(2) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974*]) provides for the attainment of a minimum age as a condition of eligibility for normal or early retirement benefits; or

- ii. a defined benefit plan (as defined in section 1002(35) of this title [*section 2(35) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act*]) provides for-

- I. payments that constitute the subsidized portion of an early retirement benefit; or

- II. social security supplements for plan participants that commence before the age and terminate at the age (specified by the plan) when participants are eligible to receive reduced or unreduced old-age insurance benefits under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.), and that do not exceed such old-age insurance benefits.

B. A voluntary early retirement incentive plan that—

- i. is maintained by—

- I. a local educational agency (as defined in section 7801 of Title 20 [*the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*]), or

- II. an education association which principally represents employees of 1 or more agencies described in subclause (I) and which is described in section 501(c) (5) or (6) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*] and exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*], and



- ii. makes payments or supplements described in subclauses (I) and (II) of subparagraph (A)(ii) in coordination with a defined benefit plan (as so defined) maintained by an eligible employer described in section 457(e)(1) (A) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*] or by an education association described in clause (i)(II),
  - o shall be treated solely for purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii) as if it were a part of the defined benefit plan with respect to such payments or supplements. Payments or supplements under such a voluntary early retirement incentive plan shall not constitute severance pay for purposes of paragraph (2).
2. A. It shall not be a violation of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of this section solely because following a contingent event unrelated to age—
- i. the value of any retiree health benefits received by an individual eligible for an immediate pension;
  - ii. the value of any additional pension benefits that are made available solely as a result of the contingent event unrelated to age and following which the individual is eligible for not less than an immediate and unreduced pension; or
  - iii. the values described in both clauses (i) and (ii); are deducted from severance pay made available as a result of the contingent event unrelated to age.
- B. For an individual who receives immediate pension benefits that are actuarially reduced under subparagraph (A)(i), the amount of the deduction available pursuant to subparagraph (A)(i) shall be reduced by the same percentage as the reduction in the pension benefits.
- C. For purposes of this paragraph, severance pay shall include that portion of supplemental unemployment compensation benefits (as described in section 501(c)(17) of Title 26 [*the Internal Revenue Code of 1986*]) that—
- i. constitutes additional benefits of up to 52 weeks;
  - ii. has the primary purpose and effect of continuing benefits until an individual becomes eligible for an immediate and unreduced pension; and
  - iii. is discontinued once the individual becomes eligible for an immediate and unreduced pension.
- D. For purposes of this paragraph and solely in order to make the deduction authorized under this paragraph, the term "retiree health benefits" means benefits provided pursuant to a group health plan covering retirees, for which (determined as of the contingent event unrelated to age)—
- i. the package of benefits provided by the employer for the retirees who are below age 65 is at least comparable to benefits provided under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.);
  - ii. the package of benefits provided by the employer for the retirees who are age 65 and above is at least comparable to that offered under a plan that provides a benefit package with one-fourth the value of benefits provided under title XVIII of such Act; or
  - iii. the package of benefits provided by the employer is as described in clauses (i) and (ii).
- E. i. If the obligation of the employer to provide retiree health benefits is of limited duration, the value for each individual shall be calculated at a rate of \$3,000 per year for benefit years before age 65, and \$750 per year for benefit years beginning at age 65 and above.
- ii. If the obligation of the employer to provide retiree health benefits is of unlimited duration, the value for each individual shall be calculated at a rate of \$48,000 for individuals below age 65, and \$24,000 for individuals age 65 and above.
- iii. The values described in clauses (i) and (ii) shall be calculated based on the age of the individual as of the date of the contingent event unrelated to age. The values are effective on October 16, 1990, and shall be adjusted on an annual basis, with respect to a contingent event that occurs subsequent to the first year after October 16, 1990, based on the medical component of the Consumer Price Index for all-urban consumers published by the Department of Labor.
- iv. If an individual is required to pay a premium for retiree health benefits, the value calculated pursuant to this subparagraph shall be reduced by whatever percentage of the overall premium the individual is required to pay.
- F. If an employer that has implemented a deduction pursuant to subparagraph (A) fails to fulfill the obligation described in subparagraph (E), any aggrieved individual may bring an action for specific performance of the obligation

described in subparagraph (E). The relief shall be in addition to any other remedies provided under Federal or State law.

3. It shall not be a violation of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of this section solely because an employer provides a bona fide employee benefit plan or plans under which long-term disability benefits received by an individual are reduced by any pension benefits (other than those attributable to employee contributions)—

- A. paid to the individual that the individual voluntarily elects to receive; or
- B. for which an individual who has attained the later of age 62 or normal retirement age is eligible.

m. Voluntary retirement incentive plans

- o Notwithstanding subsection (f)(2)(b) of this section, it shall not be a violation of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) of this section solely because a plan of an institution of higher education (as defined in section 1001 of Title 20 [the Higher Education Act of 1965]) offers employees who are serving under a contract of unlimited tenure (or similar arrangement providing for unlimited tenure) supplemental benefits upon voluntary retirement that are reduced or eliminated on the basis of age, if—
  1. such institution does not implement with respect to such employees any age-based reduction or cessation of benefits that are not such supplemental benefits, except as permitted by other provisions of this chapter;
  2. such supplemental benefits are in addition to any retirement or severance benefits which have been offered generally to employees serving under a contract of unlimited tenure (or similar arrangement providing for unlimited tenure), independent of any early retirement or exit-incentive plan, within the preceding 365 days; and
  3. any employee who attains the minimum age and satisfies all non-age-based conditions for receiving a benefit under the plan has an opportunity lasting not less than 180 days to elect to retire and to receive the maximum benefit that could then be elected by a younger but otherwise similarly situated employee, and the plan does not require retirement to occur sooner than 180 days after such election.

## Study by Secretary of Labor; Reports to President and Congress; Scope of Study; Implementation of Study; Transmittal Date of Reports

### SEC. 624. [Section 5]

- a. 1. The EEOC [originally, the Secretary of Labor] is directed to undertake an appropriate study of institutional and other arrangements giving rise to involuntary retirement, and report his findings and any appropriate legislative recommendations to the President and to the Congress. Such study shall include—
  - A. an examination of the effect of the amendment made by section 3(a) of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act Amendments of 1978 in raising the upper age limitation established by section 631(a) of this title [section 1(a)] to 70 years of age;
  - B. a determination of the feasibility of eliminating such limitation;
  - C. a determination of the feasibility of raising such limitation above 70 years of age; and
  - D. an examination of the effect of the exemption contained in section 631(c) of this title [section 1(c)], relating to certain executive employees, and the exemption contained in section 631(d) of this title [section 1(d)], relating to tenured teaching personnel.
- 2. The EEOC [originally, the Secretary of Labor] may undertake the study required by paragraph (1) of this subsection directly or by contract or other arrangement.
- b. The report required by subsection (a) of this section shall be transmitted to the President and to the Congress as an interim report not later than January 1, 1981, and in final form not later than January 1, 1982.

**Transfer of Functions** [All functions relating to age discrimination administration and enforcement vested by Section 6 in the Secretary of Labor or the Civil Service Commission were transferred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission effective January 1, 1979 under the President's Reorganization Plan No. 1.]

## Administration

### SEC. 625. [Section 6]

The EEOC [originally, the Secretary of Labor] shall have the power-



(a) Delegation of functions; appointment of personnel; technical assistance

to make delegations, to appoint such agents and employees, and to pay for technical assistance on a fee for service basis, as he deems necessary to assist him in the performance of his functions under this chapter;

(b) Cooperation with other agencies, employers, labor organizations, and employment agencies

to cooperate with regional, State, local, and other agencies, and to cooperate with and furnish technical assistance to employers, labor organizations, and employment agencies to aid in effectuating the purposes of this chapter.

## Recordkeeping, Investigation, and Enforcement

### SEC. 626. [Section 7]

a. Attendance of witnesses; investigations, inspections, records, and homework regulations

- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall have the power to make investigations and require the keeping of records necessary or appropriate for the administration of this chapter in accordance with the powers and procedures provided in sections 209 and 211 of this title [sections 9 and 11 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended].

b. Enforcement; prohibition of age discrimination under fair labor standards; unpaid minimum wages and unpaid overtime compensation; liquidated damages; judicial relief; conciliation, conference, and persuasion

- The provisions of this chapter shall be enforced in accordance with the powers, remedies, and procedures provided in sections 211(b), 216 (except for subsection (a) thereof), and 217 of this title [sections 11(b), 16 (except for subsection (a) thereof), and 17 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended], and subsection (c) of this section. Any act prohibited under section 623 of this title [section 4] shall be deemed to be a prohibited act under section 215 of this title [section 15 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended]. Amounts owing to a person as a result of a violation of this chapter shall be deemed to be unpaid minimum wages or unpaid overtime compensation for purposes of sections 216 and 217 of this title [sections 16 and 17 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended]: *Provided*, That liquidated damages shall be payable only in cases of willful violations of this chapter. In any action brought to enforce this chapter the court shall have jurisdiction to grant such legal or equitable relief as may be appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this chapter, including without limitation judgments compelling employment, reinstatement or promotion, or enforcing the liability for amounts deemed to be unpaid minimum wages or unpaid overtime compensation under this section. Before instituting any action under this section, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall attempt to eliminate the discriminatory practice or practices alleged, and to effect voluntary compliance with the requirements of this chapter through informal methods of conciliation, conference, and persuasion.

c. Civil actions; persons aggrieved; jurisdiction; judicial relief; termination of individual action upon commencement of action by Commission; jury trial

1. Any person aggrieved may bring a civil action in any court of competent jurisdiction for such legal or equitable relief as will effectuate the purposes of this chapter: *Provided*, That the right of any person to bring such action shall terminate upon the commencement of an action by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to enforce the right of such employee under this chapter.
2. In an action brought under paragraph (1), a person shall be entitled to a trial by jury of any issue of fact in any such action for recovery of amounts owing as a result of a violation of this chapter, regardless of whether equitable relief is sought by any party in such action.

d. 1. Filing of charge with Commission; timeliness; conciliation, conference, and persuasion

- No civil action may be commenced by an individual under this section until 60 days after a charge alleging unlawful discrimination has been filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Such a charge shall be filed-
  - A. within 180 days after the alleged unlawful practice occurred; or
  - B. in a case to which section 633(b) of this title applies, within 300 days after the alleged unlawful practice occurred, or within 30 days after receipt by the individual of notice of termination of proceedings under State law, whichever is earlier.
- 2. Upon receiving such a charge, the Commission shall promptly notify all persons named in such charge as prospective defendants in the action and shall promptly seek to eliminate any alleged unlawful practice by informal methods of conciliation, conference, and persuasion.

3. For purposes of this section, an unlawful practice occurs, with respect to discrimination in compensation in violation of this Act, when a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice is adopted, when a person becomes subject to a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, or when a person is affected by application of a discriminatory compensation decision or other practice, including each time wages, benefits, or other compensation is paid, resulting in whole or in part from such a decision or other practice.

e. Reliance on administrative rulings; notice of dismissal or termination; civil action after receipt of notice

- o Section 259 of this title [section 10 of the Portal to Portal Act of 1947] shall apply to actions under this chapter. If a charge filed with the Commission under this chapter is dismissed or the proceedings of the Commission are otherwise terminated by the Commission, the Commission shall notify the person aggrieved. A civil action may be brought under this section by a person defined in section 630(a) of this title [section 11(a)] against the respondent named in the charge within 90 days after the date of the receipt of such notice.—

f. Waiver

1. An individual may not waive any right or claim under this chapter unless the waiver is knowing and voluntary. Except as provided in paragraph (2), a waiver may not be considered knowing and voluntary unless at a minimum—
  - A. the waiver is part of an agreement between the individual and the employer that is written in a manner calculated to be understood by such individual, or by the average individual eligible to participate;
  - B. the waiver specifically refers to rights or claims arising under this chapter;
  - C. the individual does not waive rights or claims that may arise after the date the waiver is executed;
  - D. the individual waives rights or claims only in exchange for consideration in addition to anything of value to which the individual already is entitled;
  - E. the individual is advised in writing to consult with an attorney prior to executing the agreement;
  - F. i. the individual is given a period of at least 21 days within which to consider the agreement; or
    - ii. if a waiver is requested in connection with an exit incentive or other employment termination program offered to a group or class of employees, the individual is given a period of at least 45 days within which to consider the agreement;
  - G. the agreement provides that for a period of at least 7 days following the execution of such agreement, the individual may revoke the agreement, and the agreement shall not become effective or enforceable until the revocation period has expired;
  - H. if a waiver is requested in connection with an exit incentive or other employment termination program offered to a group or class of employees, the employer (at the commencement of the period specified in subparagraph (F)) informs the individual in writing in a manner calculated to be understood by the average individual eligible to participate, as to—
    - i. any class, unit, or group of individuals covered by such program, any eligibility factors for such program, and any time limits applicable to such program; and
    - ii. the job titles and ages of all individuals eligible or selected for the program, and the ages of all individuals in the same job classification or organizational unit who are not eligible or selected for the program.
2. A waiver in settlement of a charge filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or an action filed in court by the individual or the individual's representative, alleging age discrimination of a kind prohibited under section 623 or 633a of this title [section 4 or 15] may not be considered knowing and voluntary unless at a minimum—
  - A. subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (1) have been met; and
  - B. the individual is given a reasonable period of time within which to consider the settlement agreement.
3. In any dispute that may arise over whether any of the requirements, conditions, and circumstances set forth in subparagraph (A), (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (G), or (H) of paragraph (1), or subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (2), have been met, the party asserting the validity of a waiver shall have the burden of proving in a court of competent jurisdiction that a waiver was knowing and voluntary pursuant to paragraph (1) or (2).
4. No waiver agreement may affect the Commission's rights and responsibilities to enforce this chapter. No waiver may be used to justify interfering with the protected right of an employee to file a charge or participate in an investigation or proceeding conducted by the Commission.

## Notices To Be Posted

### SEC. 627. [Section 8]

Every employer, employment agency, and labor organization shall post and keep posted in conspicuous places upon its premises a notice to be prepared or approved by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission setting forth information as the Commission deems appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this chapter.

## Rules and Regulations

### SEC. 628. [Section 9]

In accordance with the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5 [Administrative Procedures Act, 5 U.S.C. § 551 et seq.], the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission may issue such rules and regulations as it may consider necessary or appropriate for carrying out this chapter, and may establish such reasonable exemptions to and from any or all provisions of this chapter as it may find necessary and proper in the public interest.

## Criminal Penalties

### SEC. 629. [Section 10]

Whoever shall forcibly resist, oppose, impede, intimidate or interfere with a duly authorized representative of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission while it is engaged in the performance of duties under this chapter shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or by both: *Provided, however,* That no person shall be imprisoned under this section except when there has been a prior conviction hereunder.

## Definitions

### SEC. 630. [Section 11]

For the purposes of this chapter-

- a. The term "person" means one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, labor organizations, corporations, business trusts, legal representatives, or any organized groups of persons.
- b. The term "employer" means a person engaged in an industry affecting commerce who has twenty or more employees for each working day in each of twenty or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year: *Provided,* That prior to June 30, 1968, employers having fewer than fifty employees shall not be considered employers. The term also means (1) any agent of such a person, and (2) a State or political subdivision of a State and any agency or instrumentality of a State or a political subdivision of a State, and any interstate agency, but such term does not include the United States, or a corporation wholly owned by the Government of the United States.
- c. The term "employment agency" means any person regularly undertaking with or without compensation to procure employees for an employer and includes an agent of such a person; but shall not include an agency of the United States.
- d. The term "labor organization" means a labor organization engaged in an industry affecting commerce, and any agent of such an organization, and includes any organization of any kind, any agency, or employee representation committee, group, association, or plan so engaged in which employees participate and which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment, and any conference, general committee, joint or system board, or joint council so engaged which is subordinate to a national or international labor organization.
- e. A labor organization shall be deemed to be engaged in an industry affecting commerce if (1) it maintains or operates a hiring hall or hiring office which procures employees for an employer or procures for employees opportunities to work for an employer, or (2) the number of its members (or, where it is a labor organization composed of other labor organizations or their representatives, if the aggregate number of the members of such other labor organization) is fifty or more prior to July 1, 1968, or twenty-five or more on or after July 1, 1968, and such labor organization—
  1. is the certified representative of employees under the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act, as amended [29 U.S.C. 151 et seq.], or the Railway Labor Act, as amended [45 U.S.C. 151 et seq.]; or
  2. although not certified, is a national or international labor organization or a local labor organization recognized or acting as the representative of employees of an employer or employers engaged in an industry affecting commerce; or

3. has chartered a local labor organization or subsidiary body which is representing or actively seeking to represent employees of employers within the meaning of paragraph (1) or (2); or
  4. has been chartered by a labor organization representing or actively seeking to represent employees within the meaning of paragraph (1) or (2) as the local or subordinate body through which such employees may enjoy membership or become affiliated with such labor organization; or
  5. is a conference, general committee, joint or system board, or joint council subordinate to a national or international labor organization, which includes a labor organization engaged in an industry affecting commerce within the meaning of any of the preceding paragraphs of this subsection.
- f. The term "employee" means an individual employed by any employer except that the term "employee" shall not include any person elected to public office in any State or political subdivision of any State by the qualified voters thereof, or any person chosen by such officer to be on such officer's personal staff, or an appointee on the policymaking level or an immediate adviser with respect to the exercise of the constitutional or legal powers of the office. The exemption set forth in the preceding sentence shall not include employees subject to the civil service laws of a State government, governmental agency, or political subdivision. The term "employee" includes any individual who is a citizen of the United States employed by an employer in a workplace in a foreign country.
- *[The exclusion from the term "employee" of any person chosen by an elected official "to be on such official's personal staff, or an appointee on the policymaking level or an immediate advisor with respect to the exercise of the constitutional or legal powers of the office," remains in section 11(f). However, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 now provides special procedures for such persons who feel they are victims of age and other types of discrimination prohibited by EEOC-enforced statutes. See section 321 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991.]*
- g. The term "commerce" means trade, traffic, commerce, transportation, transmission, or communication among the several States; or between a State and any place outside thereof; or within the District of Columbia, or a possession of the United States; or between points in the same State but through a point outside thereof.
- h. The term "industry affecting commerce" means any activity, business, or industry in commerce or in which a labor dispute would hinder or obstruct commerce or the free flow of commerce and includes any activity or industry "affecting commerce" within the meaning of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 [29 U.S.C. 401 et seq.].
- i. The term "State" includes a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Wake Island, the Canal Zone, and Outer Continental Shelf lands defined in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act [43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.].
- j. The term "firefighter" means an employee, the duties of whose position are primarily to perform work directly connected with the control and extinguishment of fires or the maintenance and use of firefighting apparatus and equipment, including an employee engaged in this activity who is transferred to a supervisory or administrative position.
- k. The term "law enforcement officer" means an employee, the duties of whose position are primarily the investigation, apprehension, or detention of individuals suspected or convicted of offenses against the criminal laws of a State, including an employee engaged in this activity who is transferred to a supervisory or administrative position. For the purpose of this subsection, "detention" includes the duties of employees assigned to guard individuals incarcerated in any penal institution.
- l. The term "compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment" encompasses all employee benefits, including such benefits provided pursuant to a bona fide employee benefit plan.

## Age Limits

### SEC. 631. [Section 12]

- a. Individuals of at least 40 years of age
  - The prohibitions in this chapter shall be limited to individuals who are at least 40 years of age.
- b. Employees or applicants for employment in Federal Government
  - In the case of any personnel action affecting employees or applicants for employment which is subject to the provisions of section 633a of this title [section 15], the prohibitions established in section 633a of this title [section 15] shall be limited to individuals who are at least 40 years of age.
- c. Bona fide executives or high policymakers
  1. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit compulsory retirement of any employee who has attained 65 years of age and who, for the 2-year period immediately before retirement, is employed in a bona fide executive or a high

policymaking position, if such employee is entitled to an immediate non-forfeitable annual retirement benefit from a pension, profit-sharing, savings, or deferred compensation plan, or any combination of such plans, of the employer of such employee, which equals, in the aggregate, at least \$44,000.

2. In applying the retirement benefit test of paragraph (1) of this subsection, if any such retirement benefit is in a form other than a straight life annuity (with no ancillary benefits), or if employees contribute to any such plan or make rollover contributions, such benefit shall be adjusted in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, after consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, so that the benefit is the equivalent of a straight life annuity (with no ancillary benefits) under a plan to which employees do not contribute and under which no rollover contributions are made.

## Annual Report

SEC. 632. [Section 13]

[Repealed]

## Federal-State Relationship

SEC. 633. [Section 14]

- a. Federal action superseding State action
  - o Nothing in this chapter shall affect the jurisdiction of any agency of any State performing like functions with regard to discriminatory employment practices on account of age except that upon commencement of action under this chapter such action shall supersede any State action.
- b. Limitation of Federal action upon commencement of State proceedings
  - o In the case of an alleged unlawful practice occurring in a State which has a law prohibiting discrimination in employment because of age and establishing or authorizing a State authority to grant or seek relief from such discriminatory practice, no suit may be brought under section 626 of this title [section 7] before the expiration of sixty days after proceedings have been commenced under the State law, unless such proceedings have been earlier terminated: *Provided*, That such sixty-day period shall be extended to one hundred and twenty days during the first year after the effective date of such State law. If any requirement for the commencement of such proceedings is imposed by a State authority other than a requirement of the filing of a written and signed statement of the facts upon which the proceeding is based, the proceeding shall be deemed to have been commenced for the purposes of this subsection at the time such statement is sent by registered mail to the appropriate State authority.

## Non-discrimination on Account of Age in Federal Government Employment

SEC. 633a. [Section 15]

- a. Federal agencies affected
  - o All personnel actions affecting employees or applicants for employment who are at least 40 years of age (except personnel actions with regard to aliens employed outside the limits of the United States) in military departments as defined in section 102 of Title 5 [5 U.S.C. § 102], in executive agencies as defined in section 105 of Title 5 [5 U.S.C. § 105] (including employees and applicants for employment who are paid from non-appropriated funds), in the United States Postal Service and the Postal Regulatory Commission, in those units in the government of the District of Columbia having positions in the competitive service, and in those units of the judicial branch of the Federal Government having positions in the competitive service, in the Smithsonian Institution, and in the Government Printing Office, the Government Accountability Office, and the Library of Congress shall be made free from any discrimination based on age.
- b. Enforcement by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and by Librarian of Congress in the Library of Congress; remedies; rules, regulations, orders, and instructions of Commission: compliance by Federal agencies; powers and duties of Commission; notification of final action on complaint of discrimination; exemptions: bona fide occupational qualification
  - o Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is authorized to enforce the provisions of subsection (a) of this section through appropriate remedies, including reinstatement or hiring of employees with or without backpay, as will effectuate the policies of this section. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall issue such rules, regulations, orders, and instructions as it deems necessary and appropriate to carry out its responsibilities under this section. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall-

1. be responsible for the review and evaluation of the operation of all agency programs designed to carry out the policy of this section, periodically obtaining and publishing (on at least a semiannual basis) progress reports from each department, agency, or unit referred to in subsection (a) of this section;
  2. consult with and solicit the recommendations of interested individuals, groups, and organizations relating to nondiscrimination in employment on account of age; and
  3. provide for the acceptance and processing of complaints of discrimination in Federal employment on account of age.
- The head of each such department, agency, or unit shall comply with such rules, regulations, orders, and instructions of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which shall include a provision that an employee or applicant for employment shall be notified of any final action taken on any complaint of discrimination filed by him thereunder. Reasonable exemptions to the provisions of this section may be established by the Commission but only when the Commission has established a maximum age requirement on the basis of a determination that age is a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to the performance of the duties of the position. With respect to employment in the Library of Congress, authorities granted in this subsection to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall be exercised by the Librarian of Congress.
- c. Civil actions; jurisdiction; relief
- Any person aggrieved may bring a civil action in any Federal district court of competent jurisdiction for such legal or equitable relief as will effectuate the purposes of this chapter.
- d. Notice to Commission; time of notice; Commission notification of prospective defendants; Commission elimination of unlawful practices
- When the individual has not filed a complaint concerning age discrimination with the Commission, no civil action may be commenced by any individual under this section until the individual has given the Commission not less than thirty days' notice of an intent to file such action. Such notice shall be filed within one hundred and eighty days after the alleged unlawful practice occurred. Upon receiving a notice of intent to sue, the Commission shall promptly notify all persons named therein as prospective defendants in the action and take any appropriate action to assure the elimination of any unlawful practice.
- e. Duty of Government agency or official
- Nothing contained in this section shall relieve any Government agency or official of the responsibility to assure nondiscrimination on account of age in employment as required under any provision of Federal law.
- f. Applicability of statutory provisions to personnel action of Federal departments, etc.
- Any personnel action of any department, agency, or other entity referred to in subsection (a) of this section shall not be subject to, or affected by, any provision of this chapter, other than the provisions of sections 7(d)(3) and 631(b) of this title [section 12(b)] and the provisions of this section.
- g. Study and report to President and Congress by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; scope
1. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall undertake a study relating to the effects of the amendments made to this section by the Age Discrimination in Employment Act Amendments of 1978, and the effects of section 631(b) of this title [section 12(b)].
  2. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall transmit a report to the President and to the Congress containing the findings of the Commission resulting from the study of the Commission under paragraph (1) of this subsection. Such report shall be transmitted no later than January 1, 1980.

## Effective Date

[Section 16 of the ADEA (not reproduced in the U.S. Code)]

*This Act shall become effective one hundred and eighty days after enactment, except (a) that the Secretary of Labor may extend the delay in effective date of any provision of this Act up to an additional ninety days thereafter if he finds that such time is necessary in permitting adjustments to the provisions hereof, and (b) that on or after the date of enactment the EEOC [originally, the Secretary of Labor] is authorized to issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out its provisions.*

## Authorization of Appropriations

SEC. 634. [Section 17]



There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this chapter.

---

11.3: The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.