

Senate Bill No. 1185

CHAPTER 311

An act to amend Section 56.17 of the Civil Code, to amend Section 12926 of the Government Code, to amend Section 1374.7 of the Health and Safety Code, and to amend Sections 10123.3 and 10147 of the Insurance Code, relating to genetic characteristics.

[Approved by Governor September 1, 1999. Filed with Secretary of State September 2, 1999.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1185, Johnston. Genetic characteristics: definition.

(1) Existing law prohibits discrimination in employment based on an individual's medical condition, which is defined to include genetic characteristics. Existing law also prohibits discrimination in the enrollment of health care service plans, self-insured employee welfare benefit plans, and life and disability income insurance plans on the basis of an individual's genetic characteristics, and defines "genetic characteristics" for these purposes.

This bill would recast and rephrase the definition of "genetic characteristics" for these purposes.

(2) Existing law imposes prohibitions on the disclosure of the results of a test for a genetic characteristic contained in an applicant or enrollee's medical records by a health care service plan.

This bill would specify that "genetic characteristic," as used in these prohibitions, has the same meaning as that set forth in the provisions governing discrimination in the enrollment of health care service plans.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 56.17 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

56.17. (a) This section shall apply to the disclosure of genetic test results contained in an applicant or enrollee's medical records by a health care service plan.

(b) Any person who negligently discloses results of a test for a genetic characteristic to any third party in a manner that identifies or provides identifying characteristics of the person to whom the test results apply, except pursuant to a written authorization as described in subdivision (g), shall be assessed a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) plus court costs, as determined by the court, which penalty and costs shall be paid to the subject of the test.



(c) Any person who willfully discloses the results of a test for a genetic characteristic to any third party in a manner that identifies or provides identifying characteristics of the person to whom the test results apply, except pursuant to a written authorization as described in subdivision (g), shall be assessed a civil penalty in an amount not less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and no more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) plus court costs, as determined by the court, which penalty and costs shall be paid to the subject of the test.

(d) Any person who willfully or negligently discloses the results of a test for a genetic characteristic to a third party in a manner that identifies or provides identifying characteristics of the person to whom the test results apply, except pursuant to a written authorization as described in subdivision (g), that results in economic, bodily, or emotional harm to the subject of the test, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(e) In addition to the penalties listed in subdivisions (b) and (c), any person who commits any act described in subdivision (b) or (c) shall be liable to the subject for all actual damages, including damages for economic, bodily, or emotional harm which is proximately caused by the act.

(f) Each disclosure made in violation of this section is a separate and actionable offense.

(g) The applicant's "written authorization," as used in this section, shall satisfy the following requirements:

- (1) Is written in plain language.
- (2) Is dated and signed by the individual or a person authorized to act on behalf of the individual.
- (3) Specifies the types of persons authorized to disclose information about the individual.
- (4) Specifies the nature of the information authorized to be disclosed.
- (5) States the name or functions of the persons or entities authorized to receive the information.
- (6) Specifies the purposes for which the information is collected.
- (7) Specifies the length of time the authorization shall remain valid.
- (8) Advises the person signing the authorization of the right to receive a copy of the authorization. Written authorization is required for each separate disclosure of the test results.

(h) This section shall not apply to disclosures required by the Department of Health Services necessary to monitor compliance with Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 124975) of Part 5 of Division 106 of the Health and Safety Code, nor to disclosures required by the Department of Corporations necessary to administer and enforce compliance with Section 1374.7 of the Health and Safety Code.



(i) For purposes of this section, “genetic characteristic” has the same meaning as that set forth in subdivision (d) of Section 1374.7 of the Health and Safety Code.

SEC. 2. Section 12926 of the Government Code is amended to read:

12926. As used in this part in connection with unlawful practices, unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

(a) “Affirmative relief” or “prospective relief” includes the authority to order reinstatement of an employee, awards of backpay, reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, hiring, transfers, reassignments, grants of tenure, promotions, cease and desist orders, posting of notices, training of personnel, testing, expunging of records, reporting of records, and any other similar relief that is intended to correct unlawful practices under this part.

(b) “Age” refers to the chronological age of any individual who has reached his or her 40th birthday.

(c) “Employee” does not include any individual employed by his or her parents, spouse, or child, or any individual employed under a special license in a nonprofit sheltered workshop or rehabilitation facility.

(d) “Employer” includes any person regularly employing five or more persons, or any person acting as an agent of an employer, directly or indirectly, the state or any political or civil subdivision thereof, and cities, except as follows:

(1) “Employer” does not include a religious association or corporation not organized for private profit.

(2) “Employer,” for purposes of provisions defining unlawful employment practices related to mental disability, means any person regularly employing 15 or more persons, or any person directly or indirectly acting as an agent of such an employer, and also includes the state and municipalities and political subdivisions of the state.

(e) “Employment agency” includes any person undertaking for compensation to procure employees or opportunities to work.

(f) “Essential functions” means the fundamental job duties of the employment position the individual with a disability holds or desires. “Essential functions” does not include the marginal functions of the position.

(1) A job function may be considered essential for any of several reasons, including, but not limited to, any one or more of the following:

(A) The function may be essential because the reason the position exists is to perform that function.

(B) The function may be essential because of the limited number of employees available among whom the performance of that job function can be distributed.



(C) The function may be highly specialized, so that the incumbent in the position is hired for his or her expertise or ability to perform the particular function.

(2) Evidence of whether a particular function is essential includes, but is not limited to, the following:

(A) The employer's judgment as to which functions are essential.

(B) Written job descriptions prepared before advertising or interviewing applicants for the job.

(C) The amount of time spent on the job performing the function.

(D) The consequences of not requiring the incumbent to perform the function.

(E) The terms of a collective bargaining agreement.

(F) The work experiences of past incumbents in the job.

(G) The current work experience of incumbents in similar jobs.

(g) "Labor organization" includes any organization that exists and is constituted for the purpose, in whole or in part, of collective bargaining or of dealing with employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment, or of other mutual aid or protection.

(h) "Medical condition" includes either of the following:

(1) Any health impairment related to or associated with a diagnosis of cancer, for which a person has been rehabilitated or cured, based on competent medical evidence.

(2) Genetic characteristics. For purposes of this section, "genetic characteristics" means either of the following:

(A) Any scientifically or medically identifiable gene or chromosome, or combination or alteration thereof, that is known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or his or her offspring, or that is determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that is presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(B) Inherited characteristics that may derive from the individual or family member, that are known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or his or her offspring, or that are determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that are presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(i) "Mental disability" includes any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. However, "mental disability" does not include conditions excluded from the federal definition of "disability" pursuant to Section 511 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C., Sec. 12211). Additionally, for purposes of this part, the unlawful use of controlled substances or other drugs shall not be deemed, in and of itself, to constitute a mental disability.



(j) “On the bases enumerated in this part” means or refers to discrimination on the basis of one or more of the following: race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, or age.

(k) “Physical disability” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(1) Having any physiological disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss that does both of the following:

(A) Affects one or more of the following body systems: neurological, immunological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, including speech organs, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

(B) Limits an individual’s ability to participate in major life activities.

(2) Any other health impairment not described in paragraph (1) that requires special education or related services.

(3) Being regarded as having or having had a disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, or health impairment described in paragraph (1) or (2).

(4) Being regarded as having, or having had, a disease, disorder, condition, cosmetic disfigurement, anatomical loss, or health impairment that has no present disabling effect but may become a physical disability as described in paragraph (1) or (2).

It is the intent of the Legislature that the definition of “physical disability” in this subdivision shall have the same meaning as the term “physical handicap” formerly defined by this subdivision and construed in *American National Ins. Co. v. Fair Employment & Housing Com.*, 32 Cal.3d 603. However, “physical disability” does not include conditions excluded from the federal definition of “disability” pursuant to Section 511 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C., Sec. 12211). Additionally, for purposes of this part, the unlawful use of controlled substances or other drugs shall not be deemed, in and of itself, to constitute a physical disability.

(l) Notwithstanding subdivisions (i) and (k), if the definition of “disability” used in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) would result in broader protection of the civil rights of individuals with a mental disability or physical disability, as defined in subdivision (i) or (k), or would include any medical condition not included within those definitions, then that broader protection or coverage shall be deemed incorporated by reference into, and shall prevail over conflicting provisions of, the definitions in subdivisions (i) and (k).

(m) “Reasonable accommodation” may include either of the following:

(1) Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities.



(2) Job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

(n) “Religious creed,” “religion,” “religious observance,” “religious belief,” and “creed” include all aspects of religious belief, observance, and practice.

(o) “Sex” includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

(p) “Undue hardship” means an action requiring significant difficulty or expense, when considered in light of the following factors: (1) the nature and cost of the accommodation needed, (2) the overall financial resources of the facilities involved in the provision of the reasonable accommodations, the number of persons employed at the facility, and the effect on expenses and resources or the impact otherwise of these accommodations upon the operation of the facility, (3) the overall financial resources of the covered entity, the overall size of the business of a covered entity with respect to the number of employees, and the number, type, and location of its facilities, (4) the type of operations, including the composition, structure, and functions of the work force of the entity, and (5) the geographic separateness, administrative, or fiscal relationship of the facility or facilities.

SEC. 3. Section 1374.7 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

1374.7. (a) No plan shall refuse to enroll any person or accept any person as a subscriber or renew any person as a subscriber after appropriate application on the basis of a person’s genetic characteristics that may, under some circumstances, be associated with disability in that person or that person’s offspring. No plan shall require a higher rate or charge, or offer or provide different terms, conditions, or benefits, on the basis of a person’s genetic characteristics that may, under some circumstances, be associated with disability in that person or that person’s offspring.

(b) No plan shall seek information about a person’s genetic characteristics for any nontherapeutic purpose.

(c) No discrimination shall be made in the fees or commissions of a solicitor or solicitor firm for an enrollment or a subscription or the renewal of an enrollment or subscription of any person on the basis of a person’s genetic characteristics that may, under some circumstances, be associated with disability in that person or that person’s offspring.

(d) “Genetic characteristics” as used in this section means either of the following:



(1) Any scientifically or medically identifiable gene or chromosome, or combination or alteration thereof, that is known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or his or her offspring, or that is determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that is presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(2) Inherited characteristics that may derive from the individual or family member, that are known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or his or her offspring, or that are determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that are presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

SEC. 4. Section 10123.3 of the Insurance Code is amended to read:

10123.3. (a) No self-insured employee welfare benefit plan shall refuse to enroll any person or accept any person as a subscriber or renew any person as a subscriber after appropriate application on the basis of a person's genetic characteristics that may, under some circumstances, be associated with disability in that person or that person's offspring. No plan shall require a higher rate or charge, or offer or provide different terms, conditions, or benefits, on the basis of a person's genetic characteristics that may, under some circumstances, be associated with disability in that person or that person's offspring than is at the time required of any other individual in an otherwise identical classification, nor shall any plan make or require any rebate, discrimination, or discount upon the amount to be paid or the service to be rendered under the plan because the person carries those traits.

(b) No self-insured employee welfare benefit plan shall seek information about a person's genetic characteristics for any nontherapeutic purpose.

(c) No discrimination shall be made in the fees or commissions of a solicitor or solicitor firm for an enrollment or a subscription or the renewal of an enrollment or subscription of any person on the basis of a person's genetic characteristics that may, under some circumstances, be associated with disability in that person or that person's offspring.

(d) "Genetic characteristics" as used in this section means either of the following:

(1) Any scientifically or medically identifiable gene or chromosome, or combination or alteration thereof, that is known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or his or her offspring, or that is determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that is presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(2) Inherited characteristics that may derive from the individual or family member, that are known to be a cause of a disease or disorder in a person or his or her offspring, or that are determined



to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that are presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

SEC. 5. Section 10147 of the Insurance Code is amended to read:

10147. As used in this article:

(a) “Disability income insurance” means insurance against loss of occupational earning capacity arising from injury, sickness, or disablement, and includes insurance which provides benefits for overhead expenses of a business or profession when the insured becomes disabled.

(b) “Genetic characteristics” means any scientifically or medically identifiable gene or chromosome, or alteration thereof, that is known to be a cause of a disease or disorder, or that is determined to be associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, and that is presently not associated with any symptoms of any disease or disorder.

(c) “Life or disability income insurer” means an insurer licensed to transact life insurance or disability income insurance in this state or a fraternal benefit society licensed in this state.

(d) “Policy” means (1) a life insurance policy or a disability income insurance policy delivered in this state, or (2) a certificate of life insurance benefits or disability income insurance benefits, issued under a group life or disability income insurance policy and delivered in this state by a life or disability income insurer or a fraternal benefits society, regardless of the location of the group master policy.

(e) “Test of a person’s genetic characteristics” means a laboratory test which is generally accepted in the scientific and medical communities for the determination of the presence or absence of genetic characteristics.

