

bicycles to the extent that such State law or requirement is more stringent than the Federal law or requirements referred to in subsection (a) of this section.

(Pub. L. 92-573, §38, as added Pub. L. 107-319, §1, Dec. 4, 2002, 116 Stat. 2776.)

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 2052(a)(1) of this title, referred to in subsec. (a), was redesignated section 2052(a)(5) of this title by Pub. L. 110-314, title II, §235(b)(4), Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3074.

#### § 2086. Prohibition on industry-sponsored travel

Notwithstanding section 1353 of title 31 and section 2076(b)(6) of this title, no Commissioner or employee of the Commission shall accept travel, subsistence, or related expenses with respect to attendance by a Commissioner or employee at any meeting or similar function relating to official duties of a Commissioner or an employee, from a person—

(1) seeking official action from, doing business with, or conducting activities regulated by, the Commission; or

(2) whose interests may be substantially affected by the performance or nonperformance of the Commissioner's or employee's official duties.

(Pub. L. 92-573, §39, as added Pub. L. 110-314, title II, §206(a), Aug. 14, 2008, 122 Stat. 3044.)

#### § 2087. Whistleblower protection

(a) No manufacturer, private labeler, distributor, or retailer,<sup>1</sup> may discharge an employee or otherwise discriminate against an employee with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because the employee, whether at the employee's initiative or in the ordinary course of the employee's duties (or any person acting pursuant to a request of the employee)—

(1) provided, caused to be provided, or is about to provide or cause to be provided to the employer, the Federal Government, or the attorney general of a State information relating to any violation of, or any act or omission the employee reasonably believes to be a violation of any provision of this chapter or any other Act enforced by the Commission, or any order, rule, regulation, standard, or ban under any such Acts;

(2) testified or is about to testify in a proceeding concerning such violation;

(3) assisted or participated or is about to assist or participate in such a proceeding; or

(4) objected to, or refused to participate in, any activity, policy, practice, or assigned task that the employee (or other such person) reasonably believed to be in violation of any provision of this chapter or any other Act enforced by the Commission, or any order, rule, regulation, standard, or ban under any such Acts.

(b)(1) A person who believes that he or she has been discharged or otherwise discriminated against by any person in violation of subsection

(a) may, not later than 180 days after the date on which such violation occurs, file (or have any person file on his or her behalf) a complaint with the Secretary of Labor alleging such discharge or discrimination and identifying the person responsible for such act. Upon receipt of such a complaint, the Secretary shall notify, in writing, the person named in the complaint of the filing of the complaint, of the allegations contained in the complaint, of the substance of evidence supporting the complaint, and of the opportunities that will be afforded to such person under paragraph (2).

(2)(A) Not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of a complaint filed under paragraph (1) and after affording the complainant and the person named in the complaint an opportunity to submit to the Secretary a written response to the complaint and an opportunity to meet with a representative of the Secretary to present statements from witnesses, the Secretary shall initiate an investigation and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the complainant has merit and notify, in writing, the complainant and the person alleged to have committed a violation of subsection (a) of the Secretary's findings. If the Secretary concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of subsection (a) has occurred, the Secretary shall accompany the Secretary's findings with a preliminary order providing the relief prescribed by paragraph (3)(B). Not later than 30 days after the date of notification of findings under this paragraph, either the person alleged to have committed the violation or the complainant may file objections to the findings or preliminary order, or both, and request a hearing on the record. The filing of such objections shall not operate to stay any reinstatement remedy contained in the preliminary order. Any such hearing shall be conducted expeditiously. If a hearing is not requested in such 30-day period, the preliminary order shall be deemed a final order that is not subject to judicial review.

(B)(i) The Secretary shall dismiss a complaint filed under this subsection and shall not conduct an investigation otherwise required under subparagraph (A) unless the complainant makes a prima facie showing that any behavior described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (a) was a contributing factor in the unfavorable personnel action alleged in the complaint.

(ii) Notwithstanding a finding by the Secretary that the complainant has made the showing required under clause (i), no investigation otherwise required under subparagraph (A) shall be conducted if the employer demonstrates, by clear and convincing evidence, that the employer would have taken the same unfavorable personnel action in the absence of that behavior.

(iii) The Secretary may determine that a violation of subsection (a) has occurred only if the complainant demonstrates that any behavior described in paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (a) was a contributing factor in the unfavorable personnel action alleged in the complaint.

(iv) Relief may not be ordered under subparagraph (A) if the employer demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that the employer would have taken the same unfavorable personnel action in the absence of that behavior.

<sup>1</sup> So in original. The comma probably should not appear.