

HR 1521

EMPOWER Act

Congress: 116 (2019–2021, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: Civil Rights and Liberties, Minority Issues

Introduced: Mar 5, 2019

Current Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.

Latest Action: Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties. (Apr 8, 2019)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1521>

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Frankel, Lois [D-FL-21]

Party: Democratic • **State:** FL • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (88 total)

| Cosponsor | Party / State | Role | Date Joined |
|--|---------------|------|-------------|
| Del. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large] | D · DC | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Del. Sablan, Gregorio Kilili Camacho [D-MP-At Large] | D · MP | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Blunt Rochester, Lisa [D-DE-At Large] | D · DE | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Casten, Sean [D-IL-6] | D · IL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Castor, Kathy [D-FL-14] | D · FL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Cisneros, Gilbert Ray, Jr. [D-CA-39] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Clark, Katherine M. [D-MA-5] | D · MA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Clarke, Yvette D. [D-NY-9] | D · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9] | D · TN | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Cooper, Jim [D-TN-5] | D · TN | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Cox, TJ [D-CA-21] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Davis, Susan A. [D-CA-53] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Dean, Madeleine [D-PA-4] | D · PA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. DeLauro, Rosa L. [D-CT-3] | D · CT | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Demings, Val Butler [D-FL-10] | D · FL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. DeSaulnier, Mark [D-CA-11] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Dingell, Debbie [D-MI-12] | D · MI | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Espaillat, Adriano [D-NY-13] | D · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Fitzpatrick, Brian K. [R-PA-1] | R · PA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Haaland, Debra A. [D-NM-1] | D · NM | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Harder, Josh [D-CA-10] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Hastings, Alcee L. [D-FL-20] | D · FL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Hill, Katie [D-CA-25] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18] | D · TX | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Johnson, Eddie Bernice [D-TX-30] | D · TX | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Kaptur, Marcy [D-OH-9] | D · OH | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Katko, John [R-NY-24] | R · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Kuster, Ann M. [D-NH-2] | D · NH | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Lawrence, Brenda L. [D-MI-14] | D · MI | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Lee, Barbara [D-CA-13] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Lowenthal, Alan S. [D-CA-47] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. McCollum, Betty [D-MN-4] | D · MN | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Meng, Grace [D-NY-6] | D · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Moore, Gwen [D-WI-4] | D · WI | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Nadler, Jerrold [D-NY-10] | D · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Omar, Ilhan [D-MN-5] | D · MN | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Pocan, Mark [D-WI-2] | D · WI | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Porter, Katie [D-CA-45] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Pressley, Ayanna [D-MA-7] | D · MA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Raskin, Jamie [D-MD-8] | D · MD | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Rice, Kathleen M. [D-NY-4] | D · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |

| Cosponsor | Party / State | Role | Date Joined |
|---|---------------|------|--------------|
| Rep. Roybal-Allard, Lucille [D-CA-40] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Rush, Bobby L. [D-IL-1] | D · IL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9] | D · IL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Speier, Jackie [D-CA-14] | D · CA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Stefanik, Elise M. [R-NY-21] | R · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Tlaib, Rashida [D-MI-13] | D · MI | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Underwood, Lauren [D-IL-14] | D · IL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Velazquez, Nydia M. [D-NY-7] | D · NY | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Wasserman Schultz, Debbie [D-FL-23] | D · FL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12] | D · NJ | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Wild, Susan [D-PA-7] | D · PA | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Wilson, Frederica S. [D-FL-24] | D · FL | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Resident Commissioner González-Colón, Jenniffer [R-PR-At Large] | R · PR | | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria [D-NY-14] | D · NY | | Mar 8, 2019 |
| Rep. Brownley, Julia [D-CA-26] | D · CA | | Apr 3, 2019 |
| Rep. Pingree, Chellie [D-ME-1] | D · ME | | Apr 3, 2019 |
| Rep. Visclosky, Peter J. [D-IN-1] | D · IN | | Apr 3, 2019 |
| Rep. Beyer, Donald S., Jr. [D-VA-8] | D · VA | | Apr 18, 2019 |
| Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [D-OR-3] | D · OR | | Apr 18, 2019 |
| Rep. Lawson, Al, Jr. [D-FL-5] | D · FL | | Apr 25, 2019 |
| Rep. Smith, Adam [D-WA-9] | D · WA | | May 14, 2019 |
| Rep. Lujan, Ben Ray [D-NM-3] | D · NM | | Jun 6, 2019 |
| Rep. Delgado, Antonio [D-NY-19] | D · NY | | Jun 13, 2019 |
| Rep. McGovern, James P. [D-MA-2] | D · MA | | Jul 30, 2019 |
| Rep. Napolitano, Grace F. [D-CA-32] | D · CA | | Jul 30, 2019 |
| Rep. Lofgren, Zoe [D-CA-19] | D · CA | | Sep 26, 2019 |
| Rep. Neguse, Joe [D-CO-2] | D · CO | | Oct 28, 2019 |
| Rep. Grijalva, Raúl M. [D-AZ-3] | D · AZ | | Jan 24, 2020 |
| Rep. Khanna, Ro [D-CA-17] | D · CA | | Jan 24, 2020 |
| Rep. Levin, Andy [D-MI-9] | D · MI | | Jan 24, 2020 |
| Rep. Sewell, Terri A. [D-AL-7] | D · AL | | Jan 24, 2020 |
| Rep. Carson, Andre [D-IN-7] | D · IN | | Jan 27, 2020 |
| Rep. Johnson, Henry C. "Hank," Jr. [D-GA-4] | D · GA | | Jan 27, 2020 |
| Rep. Kilmer, Derek [D-WA-6] | D · WA | | Jan 27, 2020 |
| Rep. Garcia, Jesus G. "Chuy" [D-IL-4] | D · IL | | Jan 30, 2020 |
| Rep. Keating, William R. [D-MA-9] | D · MA | | Jan 30, 2020 |
| Rep. Kennedy, Joseph P., III [D-MA-4] | D · MA | | Jan 30, 2020 |
| Rep. Quigley, Mike [D-IL-5] | D · IL | | Jan 30, 2020 |
| Rep. Trahan, Lori [D-MA-3] | D · MA | | Jan 30, 2020 |
| Rep. Hayes, Jahana [D-CT-5] | D · CT | | Feb 3, 2020 |
| Rep. Sires, Albio [D-NJ-8] | D · NJ | | Feb 3, 2020 |
| Rep. Costa, Jim [D-CA-16] | D · CA | | Feb 7, 2020 |

| Cosponsor | Party / State | Role | Date Joined |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|------|--------------|
| Rep. Escobar, Veronica [D-TX-16] | D · TX | | Feb 7, 2020 |
| Rep. Foster, Bill [D-IL-11] | D · IL | | Feb 7, 2020 |
| Rep. Jayapal, Pramila [D-WA-7] | D · WA | | Feb 7, 2020 |
| Rep. Veasey, Marc A. [D-TX-33] | D · TX | | Aug 14, 2020 |
| Rep. Barragan, Nanette Diaz [D-CA-44] | D · CA | | Oct 23, 2020 |

Committee Activity

| Committee | Chamber | Activity | Date |
|---|---------|-------------|-------------|
| Committee on House Administration | House | Referred To | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Education and Workforce Committee | House | Referred To | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Financial Services Committee | House | Referred To | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Judiciary Committee | House | Referred to | Apr 8, 2019 |
| Oversight and Government Reform Committee | House | Referred To | Mar 5, 2019 |
| Ways and Means Committee | House | Referred To | Mar 5, 2019 |

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Civil Rights and Liberties, Minority Issues

Related Bills

| Bill | Relationship | Last Action |
|-----------|--------------|---|
| 116 S 574 | Related bill | Feb 27, 2019: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance. |
| 116 S 575 | Related bill | Feb 27, 2019: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. |

Ending the Monopoly of Power Over Workplace harassment through Education and Reporting Act or the EMPOWER Act

This bill addresses policies and procedures related to claims of workplace harassment.

Specifically, the bill makes it an unlawful practice (with exceptions regarding certain settlement or separation agreements) for an employer to (1) enter into a contract with an employee or applicant, as a condition of employment, promotion, compensation, benefits, or change in employment status or contractual relationship, if that contract contains a nondisparagement or nondisclosure clause that covers workplace harassment; and (2) enforce, or attempt to enforce, a nondisparagement clause or nondisclosure clause that covers workplace harassment.

Under the bill, an employee or applicant retains any right they would otherwise have had to report a concern about workplace harassment to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and other specified agencies, regardless of whether they have signed a nondisparagement or nondisclosure clause. Employees or applicants also retain the right to pursue legal action regardless of signing such clauses.

The bill sets forth (1) enforcement powers of the EEOC and other entities, and the jurisdiction of U.S. courts, regarding workplace harassment; and (2) the applicable procedures and remedies for employees' claims.

The EEOC must (1) establish a confidential tip-line that supplements its process for submitting a charge of discrimination, and (2) provide for the development and dissemination of workplace training programs and information regarding workplace harassment.

The bill modifies the tax treatment of expenses and payments related to workplace harassment and employment discrimination.

Actions Timeline

- **Apr 8, 2019:** Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.
- **Mar 5, 2019:** Introduced in House
- **Mar 5, 2019:** Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Financial Services, House Administration, Oversight and Reform, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.