

## Employees in Minnesota to Have Right to Jury Trial under Amendment to Human Rights Act

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*Effective August 1, 2014, Minnesota employees will have a statutory right to a jury trial under the Minnesota Human Rights Act ("MHRA"). This is a significant change to how disputes brought under the MHRA are decided in the courtroom.*

Currently, Minnesota Statutes Section 363A.33, subdivision 6, states, "Any action brought pursuant to this chapter shall be heard and determined by a judge sitting without a jury." The amendment replaces that sentence with the following: "A person bringing a civil action seeking redress for an unfair discriminatory practice ... is entitled to a jury trial."

MHRA claims are now tried directly to the judge in a court trial, unlike discrimination claims under Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act, which are heard by a jury. Starting in August, however, state and federal discrimination claims in Minnesota will be handled similarly and plaintiffs will be allowed a jury trial under both statutes.

This could lead to more Minnesota plaintiffs bringing their claims in Minnesota state court instead of U.S. District Court.

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