

# Defining Discrimination, Vegan Discrimination, & Slavery As Extreme Forms of Discrimination

## Union of Saints

### 1. What Discrimination Is

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly or unequally based on a protected characteristic, such as:

- Race, ethnicity, or national origin
- Gender or gender identity
- Age
- Disability (physical or mental)
- Religion or beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Certain status protections (like pregnancy or veteran status)

It can occur in many contexts: workplaces, housing, education, public accommodations, and more.

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### 2. How People “Break Us Down”

Discrimination often doesn't just violate equality; it can be psychologically harmful. Methods include:

- **Verbal harassment** – name-calling, slurs, mocking identity
- **Exclusion or isolation** – denying opportunities, ignoring contributions
- **Microaggressions** – subtle comments or behaviors that demean
- **Threats or intimidation** – creating fear for safety or wellbeing
- **Manipulation** – coercing someone to act against their interests

These actions can:

- Cause emotional distress, anxiety, or depression
  - Damage reputation or career prospects
  - Force changes in living conditions or personal choices
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### 3. Why This Can Be Grounds for a Lawsuit

In the U.S., the law protects people against discrimination in many areas:

1. **Employment** – Under laws like the Civil Rights Act (Title VII) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), unfair treatment based on protected traits is illegal.
2. **Housing** – The Fair Housing Act prevents discrimination by landlords, property managers, or housing providers.
3. **Public Services** – Discrimination in public accommodations (stores, schools, government services) is illegal under state and federal laws.
4. **Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress (IIED)** – Even outside specific discrimination laws, if someone's actions are extreme, intentional, and cause severe emotional harm, you may have a tort claim.
5. **Harassment and Retaliation Protections** – Laws protect against retaliation for reporting discrimination.

**Example:** If a landlord repeatedly exposes a tenant to harmful chemicals or denies reasonable accommodations because of a disability, this can be both a violation of housing law and a source of emotional distress, which may be actionable in court.

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### 4. Documenting the Harm

For a strong case, documentation is essential:

- Keep detailed records of incidents, dates, and witnesses
  - Save any communication (emails, letters, texts)
  - Document health impacts (medical notes, therapy notes)
  - Track attempts to resolve the issue (complaints, mediation, formal requests)
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### 5. Practical Legal Steps

- **Consult an attorney** experienced in discrimination or housing law.
  - **File complaints** with relevant agencies (EEOC for employment, HUD for housing, state human rights commissions).
  - **Consider mediation or settlement** if available, but only with legal guidance.
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Vegan Discrimination,

#### 1. Understanding Vegan Discrimination

Vegan discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly, harassed, or excluded because of their choice to abstain from animal products. While veganism itself isn't always a legally protected category like race or religion, discrimination **can become actionable** when it relates to:

1. **Religious or ethical beliefs** – Many vegans follow veganism as part of a deeply held ethical or spiritual practice. In this case, under laws like Title VII (employment) or similar state protections, discrimination against someone for sincerely held ethical or religious beliefs may be unlawful.
2. **Health or disability accommodations** – Some people adopt veganism for medical reasons (e.g., allergies, autoimmune conditions). If a workplace or housing provider refuses to accommodate dietary needs that are medically necessary, that can violate the ADA or disability protections.
3. **Harassment or hostile environment** – Even if veganism isn't a protected category, creating a hostile environment by ridiculing someone, denying basic needs (like access to safe food), or pressuring them to compromise their ethics may constitute intentional infliction of emotional distress.

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## 2. Forms of Vegan Discrimination

- **Verbal harassment** – mocking dietary choices, calling someone “weird,” or pressuring them to eat animal products.
- **Social exclusion** – denying access to meals, gatherings, or networking opportunities because of dietary choices.
- **Employment or school discrimination** – denying promotions, opportunities, or accommodations because of vegan beliefs or ethics.
- **Retaliation** – punishing someone for requesting vegan accommodations or reporting mistreatment.

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## 3. Why It Can Be Legal Grounds for a Lawsuit

Even if veganism alone isn't a protected class, it can intersect with the law in actionable ways:

1. **Religious or philosophical belief protections** – Courts sometimes recognize “ethical veganism” as a philosophical belief similar to religion, giving it protection against discrimination in employment or education.
2. **Disability or health accommodations** – Refusing to provide vegan options for medical or allergy-related reasons can violate disability rights laws.

3. **Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress** – Persistent harassment, bullying, or coercion targeting someone’s ethical or dietary choices can support a civil claim if it’s extreme and intentional.

**Example:** If an apartment management forces a vegan tenant to live in conditions where pesticide or animal-derived products are applied, or denies accommodation requests for safe food storage, this could combine both housing law violations and emotional distress claims.

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## 4. Documenting Vegan Discrimination

- Record verbal harassment or coercion
- Save written communications showing exclusion or ridicule
- Note any health impacts or stress-related consequences
- Document requests for accommodation and responses

## 1. Slavery as an Extreme Form of Discrimination

- **Definition:** Slavery is the condition in which one person is legally owned by another and is forced to work without consent or fair compensation.
  - **Connection to discrimination:** Slavery is often justified and enforced through **discriminatory beliefs**—the idea that certain groups of people are inherently inferior, less human, or less deserving of freedom. For example:
    - In the transatlantic slave trade, Africans were enslaved in part because Europeans constructed racial hierarchies that dehumanized them.
    - Indigenous populations and other marginalized groups were enslaved or exploited due to cultural, religious, or ethnic discrimination.
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## 2. Discrimination as the Foundation for Slavery

- Slavery doesn’t exist in a vacuum—it relies on societal structures that **devalue certain people based on race, ethnicity, religion, or social class**.
  - Legal and social systems historically codified this discrimination:
    - **Slave codes** in the U.S. legally enforced the subjugation of Black people.
    - Colonial systems often tied slavery to ethnicity or religion.
  - Without discrimination, slavery would be morally and socially unacceptable to most societies. Discrimination makes it seem “normal” or “justifiable.”
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### 3. Mutual Reinforcement

- Discrimination and slavery reinforce each other:
    - Discrimination dehumanizes people → makes it easier to enslave them.
    - Slavery enforces discrimination → creates generations of marginalized, oppressed groups.
  - Even after slavery ends, discrimination persists in forms like segregation, systemic racism, or economic inequality, which are **structural echoes of slavery**.
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### 4. Modern Perspective

- While traditional chattel slavery is largely illegal, **modern forms of slavery**—human trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage—still rely on discrimination (gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) to exploit vulnerable populations.
  - Discrimination today fuels economic and social systems that allow forms of coercion or exploitation to persist.
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In short: **discrimination is the ideological and social tool that enables slavery**, and slavery is the structural manifestation of extreme discrimination. They are two sides of the same oppressive coin.