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Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. v. Massachusetts

471 U.S. 724 (1985)

Paul J. Wahlbeck, George Washington University
James F. Spriggs, II, Washington University in St. Louis
Forrest Maltzman, George Washington University



Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
THE CHIEF JUSTICE

May 28, 1985

RE: 84-325) - Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. v.
) Massachusetts
84-356) - Travelers Ins. Co. v. Massachusetts

Dear Harry:

I join.

Regards,



Justice Blackmun

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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE Wm. J. BRENNAN, JR.

May 24, 1985

No. 84-325) Metropolitan Life
) Insurance Co.
) v. Commonwealth
) of Massachusetts
)
) Travelers Ins. Co.
) v. Commonwealth
No. 84-356) of Massachusetts

Dear Harry,

I agree.

Sincerely,

Bill

Justice Blackmun

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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE BYRON R. WHITE

May 28, 1985

84-325 - Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.
v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts

84-356 - Travelers Insurance Co.
v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Dear Harry,

You have convinced me and I join your circulating
draft.

Sincerely yours,



Justice Blackmun

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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL

May 23, 1985

Re: No. 84-325 and 84-356-Metropolitan Life
Insurance Co. v. Massachusetts and
Travelers Insurance Co. v. Massachusetts

Dear Harry:

Please join me.

Sincerely,



T.M.

Justice Blackmun

cc: The Conference

To: The Chief Justice
Justice Brennan
Justice White
Justice Marshall
Justice Powell
Justice Rehnquist
Justice Stevens
Justice O'Connor

From: **Justice Blackmun**

Circulated: MAY 23 1985

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A&B
Please join me
AM

1st DRAFT

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Nos. 84-325 AND 84-356

**METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY,
APPELLANT**

84-325

v.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

TRAVELERS INSURANCE COMPANY, APPELLANT

84-356

v.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**ON APPEALS FROM THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT OF
MASSACHUSETTS**

[May —, 1985]

JUSTICE BLACKMUN delivered the opinion of the Court.

A Massachusetts statute requires that specified minimum mental-health-care benefits be provided a Massachusetts resident who is insured under a general insurance policy, an accident or sickness insurance policy, or an employee health-care plan that covers hospital and surgical expenses. The first question before us in these cases is whether the state statute, as applied to insurance policies purchased by employee health-care plans regulated by the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, is pre-empted by that Act. The second question is whether the state statute, as applied to insurance policies purchased pursuant to negotiated collective-bargaining agreements regulated by the National Labor Relations Act, is pre-empted by the labor Act.

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General health insurance typically is sold as group insur-

Join

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STYLISTIC CHANGES

To: The Chief Justice
Justice Brennan
Justice White
Justice Marshall
Justice Powell
Justice Rehnquist
Justice Stevens
Justice O'Connor

From: Justice Blackmun

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2nd DRAFT

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Nos. 84-325 AND 84-356

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY,
APPELLANT

84-325 *v.*
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

— TRAVELERS INSURANCE COMPANY, APPELLANT
84-356 *v.*
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

ON APPEALS FROM THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT OF
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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE HARRY A. BLACKMUN

May 31, 1985

MEMORANDUM TO THE CONFERENCE

Re: Holds for No. 84-325) Metropolitan Life Ins. Co. v. Mass.
No. 84-356) Travelers Ins. Co. v. Massachusetts

Two cases have been held for Metropolitan Life:

1. No. 83-1952, Pan American World Airways, Inc. v. Puchert. This case has been held only for No. 84-356, Travelers, and was previously held for No. 83-1748, Allis-Chalmers v. Lueck. The appellant/employer asserted that an employee's state-law claim that he was unlawfully discharged because of work injuries is pre-empted by the Railway Labor Act. Appellee sustained a work-related injury and was discharged by his employer as a result of his physical problems. His union grieved the discharge, and the arbitrator changed the dismissal into a six-month leave of absence. In order to return to work, appellee had to obtain a medical report from a physician and get a workmen's compensation rating permitting heavy work. After six months appellee still had not recovered, and he filed a complaint with the Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations alleging that he had been discharged from employment in violation of a state law that makes it unlawful to dismiss an employee solely because he suffered a work-related injury compensable under the State's workmen's compensation program. Haw. Rev. Stat. §378-32(2). Appellee subsequently was dismissed because he had not complied with the terms of the arbitration decision.

The Haw. Sup. Ct. reversed the agency and lower courts' determinations that the complaint was untimely. It also rejected the assertion that the claim was pre-empted by the RLA. The RLA requires compulsory arbitration to settle "minor disputes," which include disputes arising out of and remedied by a collective bargaining agreement. Because appellee's claim arose out of independent state law, it was not a minor dispute that had to be addressed only by an arbitrator. The court relied on cases that held that where the complaint is based on a federal statutory right, the court is not denied jurisdiction merely because a collective-bargaining agreement exists which provides for grievance and arbitration procedures to remedy similar violations. See, e.g., Alexander v. Gardner-Denver Co., 415 U.S. 36 (1973). It reasoned that, analogously, a claim based on a state statute should be similarly treated. The court also rejected the argument that the claim should be pre-empted in order to protect the jurisdiction of the Adjustment Board, since workers' compensation is only a peripheral concern of

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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE WILLIAM H. REHNQUIST

May 24, 1985

Re: No. 84-325) Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. v.
) Massachusetts
84-356) Travelers Insurance Co. v. Massachusetts

Dear Harry,

Please join me.

Sincerely,

WR

Justice Blackmun

cc: The Conference

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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE JOHN PAUL STEVENS

May 23, 1985

Re: 84-325 - Metropolitan Life Ins. v.
Massachusetts
84-356 - Travelers Ins. v.
Massachusetts

Dear Harry:

Please join me.

Respectfully,



Justice Blackmun

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Supreme Court of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20543

CHAMBERS OF
JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

May 24, 1985

Re: 84-325 Metropolitan Life Insurance v. Commonwealth
of Massachusetts
84-356 Travelers Insurance Company v. Commonwealth
of Massachusetts

Dear Harry,

Please join me.

Sincerely,

Sandra

Justice Blackmun

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