

California Judge Denies Amazon Workers' Remote Work Expense Claim



Amazon has defeated a proposed class-action lawsuit filed by nearly 7,000 workers in California. The workers had claimed that Amazon should have reimbursed them for home office expenses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. U.S. District Judge Vincent Chhabria in San Francisco dismissed the lawsuit, saying the named plaintiff, David Williams, failed to show that Amazon had a company-wide policy of not reimbursing employees for internet, cell phone, and other costs.

The judge denied Williams' motion to certify the workers as a class, stating that over 600 of the proposed class members had already been reimbursed \$66.49 on average for home internet expenses. Some were even reimbursed in full. The judge denied the motion without prejudice, meaning Williams can file a renewed motion later.

Craig Ackermann, a lawyer for Williams, said he plans to file a new motion excluding the 619 workers who received reimbursements from the proposed class. "We are very pleased and happy to accept the court's challenge to try again for certification following a bit more discovery," he said.

Williams sued Amazon in 2021 individually and added class-action claims last year. He accused Amazon of violating a California law that requires employers to reimburse workers for reasonable work-related expenses.

Connect with legal recruiters who understand your needs - submit your resume to BCG Attorney Search today.

Chhabria denied Amazon's motion to dismiss the case in January. The company had argued that it did not owe reimbursements because the costs resulted from stay-at-home government orders and not any decision by Amazon. However, the judge rejected this argument and allowed the case to proceed.

Williams' lawyers have filed similar lawsuits against several other companies, including IBM Corp, Fox Broadcasting Co, and Oracle Corp. Some of those cases have settled, with businesses agreeing to give remote workers stipends of up to \$83 per month to cover home office expenses.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced millions of people to work from home, increasing internet, electricity, and other home office expenses. Many employers have agreed to reimburse employees for these costs, while others have refused, leading to legal challenges.

In conclusion, Amazon has defeated a proposed class-action lawsuit by nearly 7,000 workers in California who claimed that the company should have reimbursed them for home office expenses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the judge denied the motion to certify the workers as a class, the plaintiff can file a renewed motion later. This case highlights the ongoing debate over whether employers should reimburse remote workers for home office expenses.