



**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

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**Press Release**

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# **EEOC Sues Domino's Franchise for Racial Harassment, Constructive Discharge**

Black Employees at Domino's Pizza in Olean, N.Y. Subjected to Racial Slurs, Intimidation and Physical Threats, Federal Agency Charges

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Parris Pizza Company, LLC, a Domino's Pizza franchise in Olean, New York, violated federal law when it permitted race-based harassment of Black employees by managers and co-workers, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today.

The EEOC charges that, beginning in at least 2019, Parris Pizza subjected its African American employees, including Andrew Ross and others, to a race-based hostile work environment. The mistreatment included two managers' regular and open use of slurs such as "n----r," "n----a," and "boy" during every shift. Among other incidents, one of the managers mimicked the voice of a slave owner and called Ross "boy" while the other manager stood by and laughed.

Black employees, including Ross, complained about the harassment, the EEOC said. But their complaints were met only with further harassment and intimidation. For example, upon overhearing an African American employee tell a white co-worker

not to use the “n-word,” a manager got close to the Black employee’s face and threateningly said the word, “n---a.” And when Ross complained to the owner of Parris Pizza, one of the managers threatened Ross with a pair of scissors.

According to the EEOC’s complaint, Parris Pizza took no disciplinary action against the harassers. On the contrary, one manager was promoted and the other received an increase in pay. Because of the harassment he had experienced, and Parris Pizza’s failure to protect him from discrimination, Ross was compelled to resign.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Western District of New York (EEOC v. Parris Pizza Company, LLC f/d/b/a Domino’s Pizza, Civil Action No. 1:23-cv-00111) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks back pay, reinstatement, compensatory and punitive damages, and injunctive relief.

“Racial harassment in the workplace is a crucial issue, all the more pressing in the wake of the horrific, racially motivated mass shooting in Buffalo less than a year ago,” said Jeffrey Burstein, regional attorney for the EEOC’s New York District Office. “This lawsuit sends a clear message that racial harassment of employees will not be tolerated.”

EEOC New York Acting District Director Timothy Riera added, “Every employee has a right under federal law to a workplace free of racial slurs. Employers cannot ignore this type of behavior but rather must take steps to stop it. When they fail to do so, the EEOC will step in.”

For more information on race and color discrimination, please visit

**<https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination>** (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination>**). For more information on harassment, please visit **<https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment>** (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment>**).

The EEOC’s New York District Office is responsible for processing discrimination charges, administrative enforcement, and the conduct of agency litigation in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, northern New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The agency’s Buffalo Local Office conducted the investigation resulting in this lawsuit.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at

**[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)** (**<http://www.eeoc.gov>**). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **email updates** (**<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>**).