



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

06-11-2024

Honolulu Restaurant and HR Company to Pay \$115,000 in EEOC Sexual Harassment Lawsuit

Federal Agency Charged That Square Barrels Restaurant Co-Owner Sexually Harassed Gay Employees

HONOLULU, Hawaii – Aged Artisans LLC and Surfeit Group LLC, doing business as Square Barrels, a former Honolulu-based restaurant, and their outsourced human resources company, ALTRES, Inc., doing business as SimplicityHR, have agreed to pay \$115,000 and provide other relief to resolve a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Aged Artisans' co-owner targeted gay employees for sexual harassment by exposing his genitals in the workplace, asking for oral sex and making repeated sexual comments related to the male employees' sexual orientation. Aged Artisans/Surfeit Group and their outsourced HR company, ALTRES, failed to conduct an adequate investigation, thereby allowing the harassment to continue unabated.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits

discrimination on the bases of sex and sexual orientation. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii (Case No.: 1:23-cv-00208-SOM-WRP) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its voluntary conciliation process.

In addition to monetary relief, Aged Artisans/Surfeit Group and ALTRES have agreed to put in place effective measures that will address and prevent discrimination in the workplace. These measures include equal employment opportunity monitoring to ensure compliance with Title VII and reviewing, revising, implementing and distributing companywide policies addressing discrimination and harassment. They will also put in place mechanisms to take prompt corrective action if discrimination occurs, outline an online complaint process, and provide anti-discrimination training.

The companies will also monitor and track compliance with Title VII and reports of discrimination and harassment, conduct audits of complaints and investigations regarding discrimination and harassment, and maintain appropriate records. The decree will remain under the court's jurisdiction for three years, and the EEOC will monitor compliance with the decree.

"The EEOC continues to see sexual harassment in the restaurant and hospitality industries, including against members of the LGBTQI+ community," said Anna Park, regional attorney for the EEOC's Los Angeles District, which includes Hawaii in its jurisdiction. "Employers should take notice of the measures in this decree and consider putting in place similar measures to prevent and address harassment. We are encouraged by the defendants' good faith efforts to cooperate and enter into an early settlement."

EEOC Honolulu office Director Raymond Griffin, Jr. said, "Over one-third of all charges filed with the EEOC allege harassment. Employers should be cognizant of their responsibilities under the law and be mindful of risk factors that could lead to harassment in the workplace."

The EEOC recently released updated harassment guidance that can be viewed here [**https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment**](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment**](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment)). For more information on sexual harassment, please visit [**https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment**](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment**](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment)). For more information on discrimination based on sexual

orientation or gender identity, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-sogi-discrimination>).

The Los Angeles District includes central and southern California, southern Nevada, Hawaii, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, Wake Island, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands with offices in Los Angeles, Fresno, Las Vegas, San Diego, and Honolulu.

The EEOC prevents and remedies unlawful employment discrimination and advances equal opportunity for all. More information is available at 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) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

Recent Press Releases from the Honolulu Local Office

[Mexico Restaurant Settles EEOC Sexual and Racial Harassment Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/mexico-restaurant-settles-eeoc-sexual-and-racial-harassment-lawsuit) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/mexico-restaurant-settles-eeoc-sexual-and-racial-harassment-lawsuit>)

[EEOC Sues Honolulu Restaurant and HR Company for Sexual Harassment of Male Employees](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-honolulu-restaurant-and-hr-company-sexual-harassment-male-employees) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-honolulu-restaurant-and-hr-company-sexual-harassment-male-employees>)

[EEOC Sues Mexico Restaurant for Sexual and Racial Harassment](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-mexico-restaurant-sexual-and-racial-harassment) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-mexico-restaurant-sexual-and-racial-harassment>)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Harassment

[Columbia River Healthcare to Settle EEOC Harassment Charge](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/columbia-river-healthcare-settle-eeoc-harassment-charge) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/columbia-river-healthcare-settle-eeoc-harassment-charge>)

[Amerigo Italian Restaurant Owner Companies Pay \\$60,000 in EEOC Discrimination Suit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/amerigo-italian-discrimination-suit) ([https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/amerigo-italian-](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/amerigo-italian-discrimination-suit)

restaurant-owner-companies-pay-60000-eeoc-discrimination-suit)

EEOC Releases Workplace Guidance to Prevent Harassment (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-releases-workplace-guidance-prevent-harassment>)