



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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American Screening to Pay \$50,000 to Settle EEOC Race Discrimination Lawsuit

Medical Testing Supply Company Violated Title VII by Firing Black Employee Because of Her Natural Hair Texture, Federal Agency Charged

NEW ORLEANS – Drug and medical testing supply company American Screening, LLC, has agreed to pay \$50,000 and provide other relief to settle a race discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the lawsuit, a Black employee interviewed and was selected for a sales position with American Screening while wearing a wig with long, straight hair. After she stopped wearing the wig and started wearing her hair in its naturally curly texture, the company’s owner instructed a human resources manager to counsel the employee about her hair and “looking more professional,” complaining that the worker “came in with beautiful hair.” The employee’s hair—considered type “4-A” on the Andre Walker Hair Typing System—is commonly associated with people who, like the employee, are Black.

The owner then directed the employee to begin wearing her wig with straight hair again. When the employee continued to wear her natural hair, the company fired her. The company later hired a white worker in her place, according to the EEOC’s

lawsuit.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits firing employees or subjecting them to different terms and conditions of employment because of their race. The EEOC filed suit after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its administrative conciliation process.

The suit (EEOC v. American Screening Case No. 22-01674) had been pending in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana and was resolved by a consent decree, which was entered by the court on April 4, 2024.

American Screening filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on April 7, 2023. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Louisiana (Shreveport) approved the settlement amount on Jan. 29, 2024.

The three-year consent decree settling the suit requires the company to enact policies that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race or any immutable characteristic of race, including hair texture, and policies that prohibit discrimination against an employee who chooses to display their natural hair texture or style it in a way that is protective of their natural hair or scalp. The decree ensures that employees are provided copies of the company's anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies and requires training for all employees on Title VII, racial discrimination related to hair texture, and the company's anti-discrimination and anti-retaliation policies. The company will also regularly report to the EEOC regarding race discrimination complaints it receives.

“Just as an employer may not ask an employee to change or conceal their skin color, an employer may not ask an employee to change their natural hair texture,” EEOC Chair Charlotte Burrows said. “Unfortunately, this form of discrimination continues to limit employment opportunities for Black workers, even today.”

Elizabeth Owen, a senior trial attorney at the EEOC, said, “Professionalism standards rooted in prejudices associated with racial characteristics are unlawful. No one should be terminated or treated differently because of hair texture associated with their race, under the guise of what is supposedly professional or not.”

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

The EEOC's New Orleans Field Office is part of the Houston District Office, which covers Louisiana and parts of Texas.

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 New Orleans Field Office

[Eagle Marine Services to Pay \\$45,000 in EEOC Disability Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eagle-marine-services-pay-45000-eeoc-disability-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eagle-marine-services-pay-45000-eeoc-disability-lawsuit)

[Walgreens Pays \\$205,000 in EEOC Pregnancy and Disability Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/walgreens-pays-205000-eeoc-pregnancy-and-disability-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/walgreens-pays-205000-eeoc-pregnancy-and-disability-discrimination-lawsuit)

[EEOC Sues Gracious Bakery for Pregnancy Discrimination \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-gracious-bakery-pregnancy-discrimination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-gracious-bakery-pregnancy-discrimination)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Race

[Cavco Industries, Palm Harbor Homes and Palm Harbor Villages to Pay \\$135,000 to Settle EEOC Race Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cavco-industries-palm-harbor-homes-and-palm-harbor-villages-pay-135000-settle-eeoc-race\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cavco-industries-palm-harbor-homes-and-palm-harbor-villages-pay-135000-settle-eeoc-race)

[Jacobson Memorial Hospital to Pay \\$45,000 in EEOC Retaliation Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/jacobson-memorial-hospital-pay-45000-eeoc-retaliation-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/jacobson-memorial-hospital-pay-45000-eeoc-retaliation-lawsuit)

[EEOC Sues Iron Hill Brewery for Race Discrimination and Retaliation \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-iron-hill-brewery-race-discrimination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-iron-hill-brewery-race-discrimination)

and-retaliation)