



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

09-28-2023

EEOC Sues Chipotle for Religious Discrimination and Retaliation

Federal Agency Charges Muslim Teen Was Harassed, Retaliated Against, and Forced to Quit

ST. LOUIS – National restaurant chain Chipotle violated federal law when a manager at the company’s Lenexa, Kansas location harassed a teen worker for wearing a hijab and when the company retaliated against her after she complained, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed yesterday. The agency further alleged the teen was forced to resign because of the discriminatory treatment.

According to the suit, the teen was employed as a line server. During the summer of 2021, an assistant manager began repeatedly asking her to remove her hijab, or headscarf, pressuring her to show him her hair. Despite the teen’s rejections and complaints to management, Chipotle failed to act to stop the manager’s harassment. Chipotle’s inaction resulted in the manager escalating his abuse, ultimately grabbing and forcibly removing part of the teen’s hijab.

After the teen reported the incident, Chipotle again failed to take prompt corrective action, and she was forced to submit her two weeks’ notice. The EEOC further alleges that Chipotle retaliated against the teen by refusing to schedule her to work

additional shifts unless she agreed to transfer locations, while allowing her harasser to continue working at the same location.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination – including harassment – because of a person’s religion. The law also prohibits retaliation against employees who complaint about discriminatory treatment. The EEOC filed suit (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Chipotle Services, LLC, Civil Action No. 2:23-cv-02439) in U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement via its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks monetary relief for the victim, as well as an order prohibiting future religious discrimination, and other relief.

“People of faith have a right to work free from harassment based on their religious beliefs and practices,” said Andrea G. Baran, regional attorney for the EEOC’s St. Louis District office. “Harassment of women and teen girls who choose to express their religious beliefs by wearing modest clothing or head coverings is never acceptable.”

David Davis, director of the EEOC’s St. Louis District Office, said, “Individuals should not have to choose between their sincerely held religious beliefs and their jobs. Federal law protects the rights of all workers to observe their religious practices free from harassment and retaliation.”

The EEOC’s St. Louis District Office is responsible for receiving and investigating charges of employment discrimination and conducting agency litigation in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and a portion of southern Illinois, with area offices in Kansas City, Kansas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

More information about religious discrimination is available at [**https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/religious-discrimination)). For more information on retaliation, please visit [**https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation**](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation**](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation)).

The EEOC’s [**Youth@Work website**](https://www.eeoc.gov/youth) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/youth**](https://www.eeoc.gov/youth)) presents information for teens and other young workers about employment discrimination, including curriculum guides for students and teachers and videos to help young workers learn about their rights and responsibilities.

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/). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **email updates. (https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new)**