



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

09-05-2023

Hooters of Louisiana to Pay \$650,000 to Resolve EEOC Race and Retaliation Lawsuit

Restaurant Group Settles Federal Charges It Subjected African American Workers to Racially Hostile Work Environment, Refused to Rehire Them Because of Their Race and in Retaliation for Complaints

NEW ORLEANS – Hooters of Louisiana, LLC and associated companies (“Hooters”) have agreed to pay former African American employees \$650,000 to settle a race and retaliation lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

According to the EEOC’s lawsuit, Hooters subjected African American employees at a Metairie-located Hooters restaurant to a workplace environment of offensive and demeaning remarks based on their race since at least 2017. Hooters also did not rehire any of the restaurant’s African American employees after laying off staff in 2020 at the outset of the pandemic. Instead, according to the lawsuit, Hooters initially restaffed the restaurant solely with non-Black employees. Several of the laid-off African American employees complained about the offensive racial remarks and hiring practices, but none of the former African American employees were rehired despite their qualifications.

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

discriminating based on race. The EEOC filed its suit (*Civil Action No. 2:23-cv-02864*) in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Under the three-year consent decree, approved (date), Hooters will pay the former employees \$650,000 in backpay and damages, and also conduct training, revise policies, provide regular reports to the EEOC, and post a notice affirming its obligations under Title VII.

“This is a strong resolution which serves the public interest. The decree provides relief for the former employees and will help assure no employee will be discriminated against or subject to harassment based on race,” said Rudy Sustaita, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Houston District Office. “We are pleased the EEOC and Hooters were able to quickly reach a resolution that is in the interests of justice.”

Peter Theis, trial attorney in the EEOC’s New Orleans Field Office, said, “The law does not tolerate harassment or refusing to hire based on race, and it does not tolerate retaliating against employees for complaining about discrimination.”

“Racial comments and discriminatory hiring practices have no place in any workplace, whether that is a restaurant floor, factory floor, or corporate headquarters,” said Michael Kirkland, director for the EEOC’s New Orleans Field Office. “The EEOC vigorously enforces the law to address race-based discrimination.”

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

More information about race discrimination is available at [**https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination**](https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination)).

More information about retaliation is available at [**https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation**](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation**](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation)).

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**](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**](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new)).