



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

09-22-2023

EEOC Sues Restaurant Chain for National Origin Discrimination

**Landry's Seafood House Discriminated and Retaliated Against Iranian Employee,
Federal Agency Charges**

DENVER – National restaurant chain Landry's Seafood House violated federal law when it subjected an Iranian employee to a hostile work environment based on her national origin and retaliated against her when she made discrimination complaints at its Englewood, Colorado, location, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) alleged in a lawsuit filed today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Landry's employees, including managers and supervisors, regularly and openly mocked an Iranian employee's accent, criticized her physical appearance, and treated her differently than non-Iranian employees in ways that negatively impacted her and her pay. After the employee raised complaints about the harassment with the restaurant's general manager and Landry's human resources department, Landry's failed to stop the harassment and discharged the employee.

Landry's alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 703, which prohibits workplace discrimination based on national origin. The conduct alleged in the EEOC's complaint also violates Title VII's prohibition against

retaliation. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado (EEOC v. Landry's Seafood House – Colorado, Inc. d/b/a Saltgrass CO, Inc. f/k/a Landry's Seafood House, Landry's, LLC d/b/a/ Landry's Inc., and Landry's Management, L.P., Civil Action No. 1:23-cv-02463) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

The EEOC seeks relief in the form of Landry's implementing new policies and practices to help eradicate discrimination, including required training for all managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees. The EEOC also seeks to compensate the Iranian employee for her monetary losses and for the emotional pain, suffering and inconvenience she experienced during her time at Landry's.

“Workers, regardless of their country of origin, should be treated equally and fairly in the workplace,” said Amy Burkholder, director of the EEOC's Denver Field Office. “An employer must take seriously any allegations that an employee is being treated differently due to their nationality, including harassment about their accent or other cultural differences.”

EEOC Regional Attorney Mary Jo O'Neill said, “Retaliation for raising discrimination complaints is too common in the workplace. Over 50% of all EEOC charges involve retaliation complaints. Employees must be able to raise complaints about harassment and other forms of discrimination without fear of losing their jobs.”

For more information on national origin discrimination, please visit

<https://www.eeoc.gov/national-origin-discrimination> (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/national-origin-discrimination>**)

The EEOC's Denver Field Office is one of three offices in the EEOC Phoenix District Office which has jurisdiction over Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.

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