



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

02-08-2024

Jury Awards \$1.675 Million in EEOC Disability Discrimination Case Against McLane Northeast

Federal Agency Charged That Syracuse-Area Distribution Company Refused to Interview and Hire a Qualified Deaf Applicant for Two Warehouse Jobs

NEW YORK – A seven-person jury in Syracuse, New York returned a verdict this afternoon to resolve a disability discrimination lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today. The jury awarded \$1.675 million to the discrimination victim in the case.

After a 3 ½-day trial, the jury found, following just two hours of deliberation, that McLane Northeast, a distribution company with a large facility in Baldwinsville, New York, violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by first refusing to interview a Deaf candidate in whom the company had interest once the company learned that the candidate was disabled. Then the company further violated the ADA by refusing to hire the candidate for the two entry-level warehouse jobs that she applied for, the EEOC said. The jury awarded the Deaf applicant \$25,000 in back pay, \$150,000 in emotional distress damages, and \$1.5 million in punitive damages.

“I’m heartened that the jury sent a loud and clear message with this verdict that

discriminating against Deaf job applicants is a violation of the ADA, and that employers who know they may be violating the law but discriminate anyway will be punished harshly,” said Karla Gilbride, EEOC’s General Counsel.

“The law requires an even playing field to ensure that applicants with disabilities have the same job opportunities as all other candidates for open positions; but, as the jury found, that plainly did not happen here,” said Renay Oliver, one of the EEOC trial attorneys who litigated the case.

Caitlin Brown, an EEOC trial attorney who also litigated the case, added, “The jury clearly understood that what McLane did here was wrong — Deaf applicants, and all applicants with disabilities, deserve a fair chance to get jobs to enable them to support themselves and their families.”

Apart from Oliver and Brown, the EEOC’s trial team included Assistant Regional Attorney Nora E. Curtin and Paralegals LaTeesha Vines and Jennifer Carr.

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

The EEOC’s New York District Office is responsible for processing discrimination charges, administrative enforcement, and the conduct of agency litigation in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, northern New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublic.govdelivery.com%2Faccounts%2FUSEEEOC%2Fsubscriber%2Fnew&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ce73aab0315e741bce2b508daa172655%7C3ba5b9434e564a2f9b91b1f1c37d645b%7C0%7C0%7C637999810126940396%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikl1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C2000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wZ0%2Fjb6ff3H1dcl6XtSn2UwZUXYdIddc2SemdVQzS5E%3D&reserved=0) (<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpublic.govdelivery.com%2Faccounts%2FUSEEEOC%2Fsubscriber%2Fnew&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ce73aab0315e741bce2b508daa172655%7C3ba5b9434e564a2f9b91b1f1c37d645b%7C0%7C0%7C637999810126940396%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWlloiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikl1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C2000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wZ0%2Fjb6ff3H1dcl6XtSn2UwZUXYdIddc2SemdVQzS5E%3D&reserved=0>).

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[Citizens Bank, N.A. to Pay \\$100,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/citizens-bank-na-pay-100000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/citizens-bank-na-pay-100000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit)

[EEOC Sues Library Hotel for Disability Discrimination \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-library-hotel-disability-discrimination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-library-hotel-disability-discrimination)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Disability

[Library Hotel to Pay \\$42,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/library-hotel-pay-42000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/library-hotel-pay-42000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit)

[Cash Depot Pays \\$55,000 to Settle EEOC Disability Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cash-depot-pays-55000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cash-depot-pays-55000-settle-eeoc-disability-discrimination-lawsuit)

[Nebraska Court Orders Trucking Company to Pay Deaf Driver Punitive Damages, Lost Wages After Jury Awarded Millions \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/nebraska-court-orders-trucking-company-pay-deaf-driver-punitive-damages-lost-wages-after\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/nebraska-court-orders-trucking-company-pay-deaf-driver-punitive-damages-lost-wages-after)