



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Shane's Rib Shack Franchisees to Pay \$56,500 in EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Lawsuit

Restaurant Franchisor Settles Federal Charges It Subjected Teenage Employee to Sexually Hostile Work Environment, Then Fired Her for Complaining

ATLANTA – RSPS Holdings and SRS Milledgeville, franchisors of the popular fast-casual barbeque restaurant Shane's Rib Shack, have agreed to pay \$56,500 and provide other relief to settle a lawsuit for sexual harassment and retaliation filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, the companies violated federal law when they subjected a teenage female employee at its Milledgeville, Georgia location to a hostile work environment based on her sex, then fired her in retaliation for complaining.

The employee — who was a college freshman at the time — was sexually harassed by an older male manager from September to December 2021. During that time, the manager made daily unwanted comments about the female employee's physical appearance and his romantic feelings for her; spread false sexual rumors about her;

and cornered her in areas of the restaurant without cameras, demanding a hug or attention from her before allowing her to pass by.

According to the suit, the female employee complained about the harassment to her supervisor on multiple occasions, but the supervisor took no effective remedial actions. Instead, the restaurant terminated her shortly after her last complaint and provided no plausible explanation for doing so.

Such alleged conduct violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits sexual harassment and retaliation against those who complain about it. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Macon Division (EEOC v. RSPS Holdings, et al., Civil Action No. 5:24-cv-00049) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its administrative conciliation process.

The federal court approved the two-year consent decree resolving the EEOC's lawsuit. In the decree, in addition to providing monetary relief to the victim, the companies have agreed to revise and distribute their anti-harassment and anti-retaliation policies, post a notice in the workplace informing employees of the settlement, and provide specialized training to all supervisors, managers and employees. Furthermore, the companies have agreed to provide the EEOC with periodic reports regarding any future employee complaints of sexual harassment or retaliation including a description of each employee's allegations and the companies' response.

"This case illustrates some of the dangers that young employees, especially women, can face in the workplace," said Marcus G. Keegan, regional attorney for the EEOC's Atlanta District Office. "All employees have the right to be free from harassment, and employers have a duty to protect this right. The EEOC is pleased that these Shane's Rib Shack franchisees have agreed to take the steps set forth in the consent decree to prevent sexual harassment and retaliation in the future."

Darrell Graham, district director of the Atlanta office, said, "It can be difficult for employees to report sexual harassment to their employers. This is especially true for very young people, especially teenagers. When they choose to do so, they should be supported, not punished. The EEOC remains committed to holding employers accountable in this regard."

For more information on sexual harassment, please visit

<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment> (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>**)

harassment). For more information on retaliation, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation>).

The EEOC's **Youth@Work webpages** (<https://www.eeoc.gov/youth>) present 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. For more information, visit: <http://www.eeoc.gov/youth/> (<http://www.eeoc.gov/youth/>).

The Atlanta District Office has jurisdiction over Georgia and the South Carolina counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Hampton, Jasper and Williamsburg.

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>).

Recent Press Releases from the Atlanta District Office

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

[Dillard's Pays \\$70,000 in EEOC Lawsuit for Retaliation](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/dillards-pays-70000-eeoc-lawsuit-retaliation)
(<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/dillards-pays-70000-eeoc-lawsuit-retaliation>)

[Bako Pays \\$50,000 to Settle EEOC Pregnancy Discrimination Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/bako-pays-50000-settle-eeoc-pregnancy-discrimination-lawsuit)
(<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/bako-pays-50000-settle-eeoc-pregnancy-discrimination-lawsuit>)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Sexual

Harassment

EEOC Sues Sis-Bro, Inc. for Gender Identity Discrimination and Harassment (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-sis-bro-inc-gender-identity-discrimination-and-harassment>)

Golden Entertainment, Inc. To Pay \$100,000 To Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment Lawsuit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/golden-entertainment-inc-pay-100000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-lawsuit>)

Ojos Locos Sports Cantina to Pay \$700,000 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Lawsuit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/ojos-locos-sports-cantina-pay-700000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation-lawsuit>)