



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

04-18-2024

EEOC Sues Sheetz, Inc. For Racially Discriminatory Hiring Practice

Federal Agency Charges That Employer's Criminal History Screening Causes Discriminatory Impact Against Black, Native American and Other Workers

BALTIMORE – Sheetz, a large convenience store chain, violated federal law by denying employment to a class of job applicants because of their race, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today.

The EEOC filed suit against Sheetz, Inc.; Sheetz Distribution Services, LLC; and CLI Transport, LP (collectively, Sheetz), which together operate a chain of convenience stores with over 600 locations in six states. According to the lawsuit, Sheetz has maintained a longstanding practice of screening all job applicants for records of criminal conviction and then denying them employment based on those records.

The EEOC charges that Sheetz's hiring practices disproportionately screened out Black, Native American/Alaska Native and multiracial applicants. Sheetz's companywide hiring practices violated provisions of Title VII that prohibit disparate impact discrimination, the EEOC says. The lawsuit does not allege that Sheetz was motivated by race when making hiring decisions.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII, which prohibits facially neutral employment

practices that cause a discriminatory impact because of race when those practices are not job-related and consistent with business necessity or where alternative practices with less discriminatory impact are available. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, Northern Division (U.S. EEOC v. Sheetz, Inc., et al., Civil Action No. 1:24-cv-01123-JKB, after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

“Federal law mandates that employment practices causing a disparate impact because of race or other protected classifications must be shown by the employer to be necessary to ensure the safe and efficient performance of the particular jobs at issue,” said EEOC Regional Attorney Debra M. Lawrence. “Even when such necessity is proven, the practice remains unlawful if there is an alternative practice available that is comparably effective in achieving the employer’s goals but causes less discriminatory effect.”

EEOC Philadelphia District Office Director Jamie R. Williamson said, “This highlights the significance of the observance of April as **Second Chance Month** (<https://bja.ojp.gov/news/april-second-chance-month-0>), underscoring our nation's commitment to reintegrating individuals with criminal records into society by ensuring they have fair access to employment and other essential services. To that end, the EEOC is dedicated to making sure that individuals with criminal records are not unlawfully excluded from employment opportunities because of race.”

Guidance on employer consideration of arrest or conviction can be found here: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-consideration-arrest-and-conviction-records-employment-decisions> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-consideration-arrest-and-conviction-records-employment-decisions>). For more information on race and color discrimination, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/racecolor-discrimination>).

The lawsuit was initiated by the EEOC’s Baltimore Field Office, one of four component offices of the agency’s Philadelphia District Office. The Philadelphia District Office has jurisdiction over Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, and portions of New Jersey and Ohio. Attorneys in the Philadelphia District Office also prosecute discrimination cases in Washington, D.C., and portions of Virginia.

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 Baltimore Field Office

[EEOC Sues Maryland Hotel Lodge for Pregnancy and Disability Discrimination \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-maryland-hotel-lodge-pregnancy-and-disability-discrimination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-maryland-hotel-lodge-pregnancy-and-disability-discrimination)

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

[Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration to Pay \\$40,000 to Settle EEOC Sex Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/maryland-department-transportation-state-highway-administration-pay-40000-settle-eeoc-sex\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/maryland-department-transportation-state-highway-administration-pay-40000-settle-eeoc-sex)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Race

[DHL to Pay \\$8.7 Million in EEOC Race Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/dhl-pay-87-million-eeoc-race-discrimination-lawsuit\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/dhl-pay-87-million-eeoc-race-discrimination-lawsuit)

[EEOC Sues Sureste Property Group for Race Discrimination \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-sureste-property-group-race-discrimination\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-sureste-property-group-race-discrimination)

[Cavco Industries, Palm Harbor Homes and Palm Harbor Villages to Pay \\$135,000 to Settle EEOC Race Discrimination Lawsuit \(https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cavco-industries-palm-harbor-homes-and-palm-harbor-villages-pay-135000-settle-eeoc-race\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cavco-industries-palm-harbor-homes-and-palm-harbor-villages-pay-135000-settle-eeoc-race)

