



**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

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**Press Release**

05-11-2023

# **EEOC Sues Honolulu Restaurant and HR Company for Sexual Harassment of Male Employees**

Restaurant Co-Owner Sexually Harassed Male Employees, Federal Agency Charges

HONOLULU – A Honolulu restaurant and its outsourced human resources company violated federal law by subjecting male employees to sexual harassment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today.

The EEOC charged that since 2018, a co-owner of the restaurant Square Barrels sexually harassed male employees by exposing his genitals in the workplace and making repeated sexual comments related to the male employees' sexual orientation. Square Barrels and its outsourced HR company, Altres, failed to conduct an adequate investigation, thereby failing to address and rectify the harassment.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits a hostile environment based on sex, including sexual harassment. The EEOC filed suit against Surfeit Group LLC, Aged Artisans LLC dba Square Barrels and Altres, Inc. dba SimplicityHR (EEOC v. Aged Artisans LLC dba Square Barrels et al., Case

No.1:23-cv-00208) in U.S. District Court for Hawaii after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks monetary damages for the claimants, including compensatory and punitive damages, and injunctive relief against the companies to redress such alleged unlawful conduct in the future.

“The EEOC continues to receive sex-based harassment complaints against employers,” said Anna Park, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Los Angeles District Office. “It is imperative that employers take reports of harassment seriously and address them in a timely fashion.”

Raymond J. Griffin, Jr., director of the EEOC’s Honolulu Local Office, said, “Employers have a responsibility to create a workplace free from harassment. When the harasser is an owner, there is such a power imbalance that a higher liability is assigned to the employer. The EEOC is committed to the vigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in order to create safe and equitable work environments for employees.”

For information on sexual harassment, visit: [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment) ([\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment)).

The Los Angeles District includes Central and Southern California, Southern Nevada, Hawaii, and the U.S. territories of Guam, American Samoa, Wake Island, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands with offices in Los Angeles, Fresno, Las Vegas, San Diego, and Honolulu.

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)).