



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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EEOC Sues Triple Canopy, Inc. for Religious Discrimination and Retaliation

Government Contractor Refused to Provide Religious Accommodations, and Retaliated against Employee After He Filed an EEOC Charge, Federal Agency Charges

WASHINGTON– Triple Canopy, Inc. (Triple Canopy) a Reston, Virginia-based company that provides protective services to federal agencies, violated federal law by refusing to allow a male employee to have a beard as a religious accommodation, and not scheduling him for work after he complained to the EEOC, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) alleged in a suit filed today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, despite the employee's repeated explanations that he did not belong to a formal religious denomination but nonetheless held a Christian belief that men must wear beards, Triple Canopy denied his request for a religious accommodation because the employee was unable to provide additional substantiation of his beliefs or a supporting statement from a certified or documented religious leader. Additionally, Triple Canopy subjected him to intolerable work conditions that resulted in his discharge.

Such conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires employers to accommodate sincerely held religious beliefs absent undue hardship

and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Triple Canopy) in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia (Civil Action No.1:23-cv-1500) after first attempting to reach voluntary pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. In the lawsuit, the EEOC seeks back pay, compensatory and punitive damages for the employee, and equitable relief to prevent future discrimination.

“Employers have a duty to accommodate their employees’ religious beliefs absent undue hardship,” said EEOC Philadelphia Regional Attorney Debra M. Lawrence.

“That duty exists whether or not the employee is a member of a formal religious group.”

Mindy E. Weinstein, director of the EEOC’s Washington Field Office, added,

“Employees should not have to choose between their religious beliefs and their employment. Federal law protects the rights of people with varying religious beliefs, including those outside an established religious institution.”

The EEOC’s Washington Field Office is one of four offices in the Philadelphia District, which investigates discrimination charges and prosecutes cases arising out of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, parts of New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

For more information on religious discrimination, please visit

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

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at

<https://www.eeoc.gov/> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/>**)**. Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our email updates.