



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

09-19-2023

EEOC Sues Walmart for Sexual Harassment and Retaliation

Federal Agency Charges Female Employees Were Subjected to Egregious Sexual Harassment and Company Fired Employee Who Complained

LEWISBURG, W.Va. – Wal-Mart Stores East, LP violated federal law when it subjected female employees to sexual harassment and fired a female employee in retaliation for reporting the harassment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit announced today.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, the manager of Walmart Supercenter #1499 in Lewisburg, West Virginia, subjected a class of female employees to egregious sexual harassment, including unwelcome and offensive sexual touching, requests for sexual acts in exchange for money or favorable treatment at work, requests that female workers expose intimate body areas, and making crude sexual innuendos. Wal-Mart Stores East, LP had received multiple complaints about the store manager's conduct and failed to take appropriate action to stop the harassment. After the store manager subjected a female employee to particularly egregious harassment, she reported the harassment to Wal-Mart Stores East, LP, and the company fired her in retaliation for her actions opposing the harassment and for filing a charge of discrimination, the EEOC said.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits harassment and discrimination because of sex. Title VII also prohibits employers from discharging employees in retaliation for opposing harassment or discrimination or for participating in the EEOC complaint and investigative process. The EEOC filed suit (U.S. EEOC v. Wal-Mart Stores East, LP, Civil Action No. 5:23-cv-00623) in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia (Beckley) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through the conciliation process.

“Employers must act promptly and forcefully to protect workers from sexual harassment,” said EEOC Philadelphia District Office Regional Attorney Debra Lawrence. “All too often, employers instead choose to callously disregard that legal duty and punish workers for reporting harassment. The EEOC is committed to vindicating the rights of workers subjected to such offensive harassment and retaliation,”

EEOC Philadelphia District Office Director Jamie R. Williamson said, “Employees have the right to a workplace free of discrimination, and no employee should have to endure offensive and sexual comments while in the workplace, especially from persons in positions of authority.”

For more information on sexual harassment, please 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)).

For more information on retaliation, please visit [**https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation**](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation**](https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation)).

The EEOC’s Philadelphia District Office has jurisdiction over West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and portions of Ohio and New Jersey. Attorneys in the Philadelphia District Office also prosecute discrimination cases in Washington, D.C., and portions of Virginia.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at [**www.eeoc.gov**](https://www.eeoc.gov) ([**https://www.eeoc.gov**](https://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)).