



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

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## **Press Release**

09-08-2023

# **Walmart Refused to Provide Qualified Interpreters for Deaf Employees, EEOC Charges in Suit**

Overnight Stockers Forced to Resign After Being Denied Reasonable Accommodations

ST. LOUIS – Multinational retailer Walmart violated federal law when it failed to provide effective means of communication to two employees with disabilities, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today.

According to the EEOC, the two employees were hired by Walmart as overnight stockers at a store in Olathe, Kansas. The employees, both of whom are deaf, required an interpreter for communication during key times, such as orientation, training, and meetings. The pair also needed day-to-day tasks to be communicated in writing. In response, Walmart refused to hire a qualified person to serve as an interpreter, and management routinely refused to communicate with the two employees in writing. The EEOC further alleges that the employees were forced to quit because of Walmart's refusal to provide effective, on-the-job communication.

Such alleged conduct violates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which

prohibits discrimination based on disability and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to allow employees with disabilities to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Walmart, Civil Action No. 2:23-cv-02395) in U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement via its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks back pay and compensatory and punitive damages, as well as injunctive relief to prevent future discrimination.

“The purpose of the ADA is not just to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities, but to ensure that they receive reasonable accommodations so they can be successful, productive members of our country’s workforce,” said Andrea G. Baran, regional attorney for the EEOC’s St. Louis District office. “These accommodations are not only required by law, but they are good for businesses, our communities, and our economy.”

David Davis, director of the EEOC’s St. Louis District office, said, “Even now, over 30 years after passage of the ADA, some employers still fail to provide necessary accommodations for deaf workers. We need to encourage all businesses to provide reasonable accommodations so these individuals can fully participate in our workforce and provide for themselves and their families.”

More information about disability discrimination is available at [\*\*https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination\*\*](https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination) ([\*\*http://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination\*\*](http://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination)).

The EEOC’s St. Louis District Office is responsible for receiving and investigating charges of employment discrimination and conducting agency litigation in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and a portion of southern Illinois, with area offices in Kansas City, Kansas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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)).