

The EEOC's Battlecry: Cracking down hard on Religious Discrimination

2 min read

Nov 4, 2015

On the heels of the [biggest religious discrimination case in years](#), and in line with the EEOC's "hottest litigation trend" (according to David Lopez, General Counsel of the EEOC, pictured right), the EEOC continued its charge against religious discrimination in the workplace in [EEOC v. Star Transport Co., Inc.](#) Last week, a Northern District of Illinois jury awarded two Muslim truck drivers \$240,000 finding Star Transport fired them for refusing to transport alcohol despite their religious beliefs.

Naturally, Star Transport's argument failed and the jury awarded the two drivers \$40,000 in compensatory and \$200,000 in punitive damages.

The Star Transport case is just one of a multitude of religious discrimination cases the EEOC brought this year. Others include the [National Tire and Battery case](#) (Arab and Muslim mechanics accused of making bombs), the [Consol Energy/Consolidation Coal case](#) (employee who saw "Mark of the Beast" in biometric scanner forced to retire), the [National Federation of the Blind case](#) (Hebrew Pentecostal employee refused to work on Saturdays), the [Dunkin' Donuts case](#) (employer revoked job offer because applicant couldn't work on Saturdays), the [other UPS case](#) (employees who wore beards as part of their religious observance were not promoted until they shaved) (not to be confused with the UPS pregnancy discrimination case), and the [Rotten Ralph's Restaurant case](#) (Muslim employee refused to remove headscarf). And those are just the cases dating back to July.

Ultimately, employers should be extremely vigilant about taking potentially discriminatory actions against employees, especially for seemingly religious reasons. The EEOC has certainly made its intentions to take a harsh stance against religious discrimination known, and the cases they choose to litigate are increasingly high-profile. Employers should carefully evaluate any potentially discriminatory adverse action so as not to become another EEOC test case.

Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP is a U.S.-based law firm with offices nationwide. The firm's national reputation spans the insurance industry, the financial services sector, professional services, and other highly regulated industries. Hinshaw provides holistic legal solutions—from litigation and dispute resolution,

and business advisory and transactional services, to regulatory compliance—for clients of all sizes. Visit www.hinshawlaw.com for more information and follow @Hinshaw on LinkedIn and X.

Topics

Religious Discrimination, Discrimination, Reasonable Accommodation, Religion