

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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CONTACT: A. Luis Lucero, Jr.
Acting Regional Attorney
(213) 894-1083

Olophius E. Perry
District Director
(213) 894-1112

Samantha E. Blake
Trial Attorney
(213) 894-1062

TTY: (213) 894-1121

WESTERN CASEWORK TO PAY \$600,000 FOR HARASSMENT OF HISPANIC EMPLOYEES BASED ON NATIONAL ORIGIN

EEOC SUIT SAID CABINET MAKER SUBJECTED CLASS OF LATINOS TO PHYSICAL AND VERBAL ABUSE

LAS VEGAS – The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced a \$600,000 settlement of a national origin harassment lawsuit against Western Casework Corporation, a Las Vegas-area cabinetmaker that supplies cabinetry to businesses and commercial construction projects.

The lawsuit, filed under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, alleged that the company's supervisors and other workers subjected six Hispanic males, who were field workers at the company, along with a class of similarly situated workers, to severe, pervasive physical and verbal abuse and humiliation. The unlawful conduct included physical harm and unwanted physical contact; and derogatory, hurtful commentary and jokes. The suit also alleged that the company engaged in a pattern or practice of such abuses. Eight workers, including the six originally named, later intervened as plaintiffs in the lawsuit. In part, the settlement terms require Western Casework to pay \$400,000 to some of the workers and to set aside an additional \$200,000 for potential class members who may come forward in the coming months.

The company has also agreed to hire a consultant to develop and implement new policies and procedures for handling complaints of discrimination and harassment. EEOC's lawsuit was filed in June 2004 in the United States District Court for the District of Nevada, Case No. CV-S-04-0907-LDG-PAL.

Acting Regional attorney Luis Lucero of the EEOC's Los Angeles District Office said of the settlement, "This should serve as a warning to companies out there that the abuse of Latino workers will not be tolerated. We are pleased, however, that Western Casework acted cooperatively in achieving a resolution of this matter and we commend them for it."

The EEOC's Los Angeles District Office investigates complaints of discrimination from employees working in Nevada. District Director Olophius E. Perry added, "Employers who have effective anti-harassment policies in place can avoid the serious problems encountered by these employees. We want to work proactively with any employer to help prevent or quickly identify harassment issues so that the employer can take prompt and appropriate action to ensure a harassment-free work environment."

EEOC enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Equal Pay Act; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; prohibitions against discrimination affecting individuals with disabilities in the federal government; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Further information about the Commission is available on its Web site at www.eeoc.gov.

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