

EEOC Sues Arthur's Restaurant & Bar for Pregnancy Discrimination

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U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Addison Eatery Forced Waitress Out Because She Was 'Beginning to Show,' Federal Agency Charges

DALLAS - Arthur's Restaurant and Bar, located in Addison, Texas, violated federal law when it terminated a waitress because she was pregnant, the **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)** charged in a lawsuit it filed in late August.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, Jennifer Todd, who was pregnant, was pressured to take early maternity leave by management. On Aug. 3, 2012, the EEOC's investigation revealed that Arthur's owner, Mohsen Heidari, complained that Todd was "starting to show," and the company claimed that her baby's health was at risk because Arthur's is a smoking establishment. On Aug. 8, 2014 the company forced her to begin her maternity leave early, and never assigned her another shift thereafter, effectively discharging her.

Such alleged conduct violates ***Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964***. The EEOC sued in the Northern District of Texas (Civil Action No. 3:14-cv-03033-N) after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks injunctive relief including the formulation of policies to prevent and correct sex and pregnancy discrimination. The suit also seeks lost wages and compensatory and punitive damages for Todd.

"Employers should be well beyond archaic prejudices against women who are pregnant," said Robert Canino, EEOC Dallas District Office Regional Attorney. "Too many employers have continued to deny female workers equal opportunity to earn a living for their families and themselves, simply because they are pregnant or 'showing.' The EEOC continues to combat such prejudices and practices as part of its efforts to educate the public about the rights of women in the workplace - everyone should be free from this obvious form of sex discrimination."

Since the start of fiscal year 2011, the EEOC has filed over 45 lawsuits involving pregnancy discrimination. During that time, the federal agency has recovered approximately \$3,500,000 -- as well as important injunctive and other case-specific "make whole" relief -- for victims of pregnancy discrimination through its litigation program.

The EEOC recently issued its [Enforcement Guidance on Pregnancy Discrimination and Related Issues](#), along with a question-and-answer document about the guidance and a fact sheet for small businesses. The Enforcement Guidance, Q&A document, and Fact Sheet are available on the EEOC's website.

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov.

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