

Long John Silver's to Pay Teen \$200,000 Over Sexual Harassment Claims

EEOC settles claims on behalf of complaint brought by female teenage employee harassed by adult male managers. by Nadia El-Yaouti

OC, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, April 15, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- National seafood chain Long John Silver's has agreed to pay \$200,000 in addition to other relief to settle sexual harassment allegations brought forward by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The case resolved by the settlement is EEOC v. LJS Opco Two, LLC d/b/a Long John Silver's Store #70250, Civil Action No. 3:21-cv-00717, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois on June 25, 2021.



Mark Dillman, Florida Employment Law Attorney

The lawsuit was brought by the EEOC on June 25, 2021. In it, the complaint detailed claims that a teenage girl who worked for the seafood chain's Centralia, Illinois, location was sexually harassed during her time there.



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*Mark Dillman, Florida
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The teen girl details that she was the victim of unwanted sexual advances by two male adult managers. The adult managers perpetuated lewd comments and unwanted touching. The EEOC also details that the two men sent sexually explicit text messages and videos to the teen. At one point, the men even offered propositions for sex.

Such advances, which constitute sexual harassment, are a direct violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Under the Act, sexual harassment and retaliation for reporting the harassment are prohibited.

According to the teenager, after she reported the harassment, the company failed to stop it and went so far as to retaliate against the teenager. The teen details that because she reported the harassment, her hours at the restaurant were reduced.

Mark Dillman, a [Florida employment law attorney at the law office of James P. Tarquin, P.A.](#), explains the obligations of a company to respond to sexual harassment complaints. "Once an employer knows or should know that an employee is being sexually harassed in the workplace, the employer is obligated by federal employment discrimination law to take prompt and effective remedial action to stop the harassment and prevent recurrence of the harassment." Dillman continues, "When an employer takes no remedial action, or the remedial action taken is ineffective in stopping the harassment, the employer can be held liable under federal employment discrimination law for creating and maintaining a sexually hostile work environment."

On the other hand, employers can often avoid liability for sexual harassment if they respond appropriately. Again, Dillman explains, "When the remedial action taken by the employer stops the harassment and prevents recurrence of the harassment, courts generally rule that the employer is not liable for the sexually harassing behavior because the employer fulfilled its remedial obligation under federal employment discrimination."

As part of the settlement, the seafood restaurant has agreed to pay the teenager \$200,000 to settle the claims. According to officials, the restaurant chain refused any pre-litigation settlement as part of a consultation process.

In addition to the monetary payout, the seafood chain has agreed to implement harassment prevention policies and undergo training on Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The company has also agreed to post notices about the settlement details and report any sex discrimination complaints to the EEOC for the next two years.

A spokesperson for Long John Silver's shared that the company's "policies, procedures, and training programs are designed to keep employees protected" and that they "do not tolerate harassment of any kind." The statement goes on, "We were extremely disappointed to learn of the allegations that led to this settlement. We have worked closely with the EEOC and local crew members to investigate and take corrective action.

The restaurant has gone on to explain that the two managers who initiated the sexual harassment are no longer with the company.

Gregory Gochanour, regional attorney of the EEOC's Chicago District Office, shared in a release, "We applaud the courage of the young woman who came forward to report this harassment. No woman should be forced to work in this kind of environment, and her willingness to come forward helped protect other vulnerable young women from suffering the same treatment."

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