

EEOC Actively Enforces Equal Pay Violations

Labor & Employment Law Update

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The EEOC's Strategic Enforcement Plan (SEP) for Fiscal Years 2017-2021 identified "Equal Pay" as a priority area that demands focused attention. The EEOC's recent press releases show it is actively fulfilling this strategic mission.

In the third scenario, the EEOC obtained a judgment against a pizza restaurant for violating the Equal Pay Act. Two high school friends—one male and one female—applied to be "pizza artists" and both were hired. However, the female applicant received \$0.25 less an hour in starting pay. When she realized this discrepancy, she contacted the restaurant to complain. In response, the restaurant withdrew the offers of employment to both individuals. The EEOC's attorney referenced the vast amount of recent news related to sexual harassment and stated unequal pay is simply another form of sex discrimination in the workplace. Further, the EEOC stressed that it will continue to thoroughly investigate and enforce equal pay requirements.

Bottom Line

The overwhelming media coverage of sexual harassment and unequal treatment in the workplace reinforces that employers must make equal treatment a top priority. Periodic review of policies and practices, with attention to pay policies, remains critical to limit employer exposure to lawsuits alleging unequal pay or treatment.