



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

PRESS RELEASE

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Boeing Settles Two EEOC Sex Discrimination and Retaliation Lawsuits for \$380,000

PHOENIX -- Chicago-based The Boeing Company, an aerospace giant that manufactures military aircraft and commercial jetliners, has agreed to pay \$380,000 and administer far-reaching injunctive measures to settle two lawsuits brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency announced today.

In one case, filed in 2005 (*EEOC v. The Boeing Company*, 05cv03034 PHX FJM), the EEOC brought sex discrimination and retaliation claims against Boeing on behalf of two female engineers at Boeing's Mesa, Arizona facility. Antonia Castron complained of gender-based harassment, including sexist remarks, creating a hostile environment and, a few days later, she found herself transferred to a new unit that did not suit her skill set. Less than two months after the transfer, Boeing laid her off, purportedly because she could not perform as well as other engineers in her new unit.

"Instead of stopping the harassment or reprimanding the men who tormented me, they moved me to a unit that designed structures," said Castron. "I was skilled at electrical engineering. That's like asking a heart surgeon to do brain surgery. Then they evaluated me for layoff based on my ability to perform structural work. They set me up for layoff."

The EEOC claimed that Boeing managers harbored discriminatory and retaliatory motives when it transferred and terminated Castron. Manufacturing engineer Renee Wrede twice complained of sex-based harassment, and twice Boeing's internal investigators substantiated her complaints. Nonetheless, according to the EEOC, the company allowed her harassers to influence her layoff evaluations and reduce her scores. As a result, Wrede also received a layoff notice in October 2002. The EEOC's investigation showed that Boeing manipulated evaluation scores used in its October 2002 reduction in force to justify the terminations of Wrede and Castron.

"An employer is only setting itself up for more trouble when it punishes a worker for exercising her right to complain about unlawful activity in the workplace," said EEOC Acting Chairman Stuart J. Ishimaru. "The EEOC is always especially concerned when we uncover this kind of unlawful retaliation. It chills witnesses and victims from reporting illegal discrimination at work, and therefore interferes dangerously with the Commission's law enforcement efforts."

In an earlier lawsuit (*EEOC v. The Boeing Company*, CV-03-1210-PHX-PGR), the EEOC sought relief on behalf of Kelley Miles, a female mechanic at the Mesa facility, who works on the Apache helicopter that Boeing manufactures for the U.S. Army. The EEOC charged that Boeing allowed Miles' co-workers to harass her on an ongoing basis due to her gender and allowed one or more managers to contribute to that harassment without taking appropriate steps to address the behavior. Much of the harassment directed at Miles was designed to make it more difficult for her to perform her job, the EEOC said. Male co-workers took Miles' tools and either broke them, hid them, or changed the adjustments before returning them. Other harassment was sexual in nature. Miles reported this conduct to Boeing's Human Resources Department, but the company did nothing to address it. As a result, the harassment continued.

The suit also charged that Boeing retaliated against Miles for complaining about gender-based harassment. After Miles reported her co-workers' conduct to Boeing's Human Resources Department, a manager warned several of Miles' co-workers to be careful of what they said to her because the manager had them on a list.

Boeing's alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin and protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation.

The consent decrees reached between the parties provide for \$380,000 in monetary relief for Castron, Wrede and Miles and an injunction prohibiting future discrimination and retaliation. Further, the EEOC obtained curative relief, such as training, to prevent Boeing from engaging in any further discrimination and retaliation.

"The right of an employee to oppose discrimination in the workplace is fundamental," said Mary Jo O'Neill, regional attorney for the EEOC's Phoenix District Office. "Employees should be able to report discrimination without fearing that their employers will make the situation worse by retaliating against them."

Rayford Irvin, EEOC acting district director in Phoenix, added, "Covert attempts to mask discriminatory and retaliatory motives, such as Boeing employed, will fool no one."

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws against employment discrimination. Further information is available at www.eeoc.gov.