



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## Huntington Ingalls and Contractor Sued by EEOC for Firing Men for Opposing Sexual Harassment

### ***Shipyards Contractor Fired Male Cleaners for Reporting Physical Abuse by Female Supervisor, Federal Agency Charged***

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Newport News-based Huntington Ingalls, Inc., formerly Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, Inc., and Chesapeake-based Quality Coatings of Virginia, Inc., violated federal law by firing two employees for opposing sexual harassment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed today. Huntington Ingalls, a contractor for the U.S. government, employs over 15,000 people. Quality Coatings, a contractor for Huntington Ingalls, performed cleaning and painting on the *U.S.S. George H. W. Bush* while it was at the Norfolk Naval Operations Base in Norfolk, Va.

According to the EEOC's complaint, Quality Coatings employed Brian Glover and Walter Strickland as cleaners on the *Bush*. Sometime prior to May 1, 2009, Glover witnessed a female Quality Coatings cleaning supervisor kneeling a male subordinate in his groin and heard about her kneeling a second employee in the groin as well. On or about May 1, 2009, Glover discussed the conduct with a Huntington Ingalls manager, who advised him that such conduct was considered sexual harassment. Soon thereafter on that same day, May 1, 2009, Glover and his co-worker Walter Strickland were both asked to provide a written statement about the supervisor's conduct, which they both provided. According to the EEOC's complaint, within hours of providing the written statements, Glover and Strickland were discharged from their cleaner positions in retaliation their roles in bringing the supervisor's sexually harassing conduct to the attention of Huntington Ingalls and Quality Coatings managers.

Retaliation against employees for complaining about workplace discrimination violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC filed suit in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk Division (*EEOC v. Quality Coatings of Virginia, Inc., and Huntington Ingalls Incorporated*, Civil Action No. 2:11-cv-490), after first attempting to reach a voluntary settlement.

The EEOC seeks monetary relief for Glover and Strickland and an injunction enjoining Quality Coatings and Huntington Ingalls from engaging in further retaliation against employees based on their opposition to unlawful employment practices or employment practices which the employee reasonably believes to be unlawful under the federal statutes enforced by the EEOC.

"Employees should be confident that they can make their employers aware of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws without fear of reprisal," said Lynette A. Barnes, regional attorney for the EEOC's Charlotte District Office. "The anti-retaliation provisions of Title VII are indispensable to the attainment of a workplace free of discrimination. And the gender of the perpetrator or the victim of retaliation matters not at all – everyone is protected by anti-discrimination law."

The EEOC enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. Further information about the EEOC is available on the agency's web site at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).