

## EEOC's Litigation Focus Includes Cases Involving Teen Workers

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While the EEOC receives thousands of charges each year, it selects very few to go forward to litigation with EEOC as the plaintiff. It is no easy task to predict which specific charges will become lawsuits litigated by EEOC, but charges that involve allegations of discriminatory treatment against multiple individuals – including teen workers – seem to be among those that attract attention at the federal agency.

A case in point is the recent resolution for \$1 million of a federal court lawsuit that EEOC brought in Wisconsin against the operator of several fast food restaurants. The allegations included sexual harassment and retaliation against several workers, including teenagers, and 10 former workers reportedly will share in the settlement. The defendant also will be subject to training, reporting, and monitoring obligations under the consent decree.

The fact that EEOC will go to bat for teen workers is not particularly surprising, given that the EEOC also has touted its [Youth@Work](#) initiative as a way to educate teens and young adults on the prevention of discriminatory treatment in the workplace. Employers who hire, train, and employ teen workers – which seem to predominate in the restaurant, retail, and recreation sectors – should be aware that EEOC may take an aggressive stance toward allegations of harassment and retaliation involving young people who are new to the workforce.

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