

LAW & JUSTICE

Fred Meyer Sued for Sexual Harassment

Equal Opportunity Commission takes action

Last week the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission sued the grocery chain Fred Meyer for failing to stop a regular customer from harassing female employees.

According to the EEOC's lawsuit, female employees at Fred Meyer's Oak Grove store in Milwaukie, Ore., were sexually harassed by a customer who visited the store almost daily, sometimes several times a day, since at least 2007.

Despite numerous complaints by the staff, the EEOC, which enforces federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination, said Fred Meyer managers excused the customer's offensive behavior as "hearsay," even



Fred Meyer management is accused of failing to stop a customer from harassing female employees at the Oak Grove store in Milwaukie.

though the women gave firsthand accounts of their experiences.

"Fred Meyer's failure to address the continued harassment of its employees is inexcusable," said EEOC San

Francisco District Director Mike Baldonado. "This store received complaints almost on a daily basis about a regular customer repeatedly touching and groping its female employees.

According to the EEOC, Title

VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sexual harassment and requires employers to take prompt action to investigate and to stop the behavior after they receive complaints.

Laura Morrow, a Fred Meyer

employee since 2002 and one of the women who brought the case to EEOC's attention, said, "I just want to see to it that this doesn't happen to anyone else. Fred Meyer shouldn't have let this happen to any of us in the first place. I reported this problem time and time again and they didn't do anything to protect me."

The law protects against harassment in the workplace, not only from supervisors and co-workers, but also from non-employees such as customers, vendors, contractors and even delivery persons. The commission explained they are filing the lawsuit against Fred Meyer because employers are required by law to report and investigate to take appropriate action or must face legal consequences.

"The customer is not always right," said EEOC Regional Attorney William R. Tamayo.

Further information about the EEOC is available on its web site at www.eeoc.gov.

Minorities Make Up Majority of Babies

Census data confirms changing social order

(AP) - For the first time, minorities make up a majority of babies in the U.S., part of a sweeping race change and a growing age divide between mostly white, older Americans and predominantly minority youths that could reshape government policies.

Preliminary 2010 census estimates also show the share of African-American households headed by women - mostly single mothers - now exceeds African-American households with married couples, a sign of declining U.S. marriages overall but also of continuing challenges for black youths without involved fathers.

Demographers say the numbers provide the clearest confirmation yet of a changing social order, one in which racial and ethnic minorities will

become the U.S. majority by midcentury.

Currently, non-Hispanic whites make up just under half of all children 3 years old, whereas in 1990, more than 60 percent of children in that age group were white, according to the 2009 annual census survey.

The preliminary figures are based on an analysis of the Current Population Survey as well as the 2009 American Community Survey, which sampled 3 million U.S. households to determine that whites made up 51 percent of babies younger than 2. After taking into account a larger-than-expected jump in the minority child population in the 2010 census, the share of white babies falls below 50 percent.

Twelve states and the Dis-

trict of Columbia now have white populations below 50 percent among children under age 5 - Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Florida, Maryland, Georgia, New Jersey, New York and Mississippi. That's up from six states and the District of Columbia in 2000.

At current growth rates, seven more states could flip to "minority-majority" status among small children in the next decade: Illinois, North Carolina, Virginia, Colorado, Connecticut, South Carolina and Delaware.

By contrast, whites make up the vast majority of older Americans - 80 percent of seniors 65 and older and roughly 73 percent of people ages 45-64. Many states with high percentages of white seniors also have particularly large shares of minority

children, including Arizona, Nevada, California, Texas and Florida.

Kenneth Johnson, a sociology professor and senior demographer at the University of New Hampshire, noted that much of

the race change is being driven by increases in younger Hispanic women having more children than do white women, who have lower birth rates and as a group are moving beyond their prime childbearing years.



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