
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2010
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV

CRT
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SETTLES SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAWSUIT
AGAINST DOÑA ANA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

WASHINGTON –The Justice Department announced today that a federal court has approved a settlement resolving a sexual harassment lawsuit against Doña Ana County, New Mexico. The department’s complaint, filed in May 2008, alleges that the county subjected five women, all current or former county custodians, to a hostile work environment because of their sex, in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The complaint alleges that over the course of approximately 10 months, the male supervisor of these female custodians regularly used derogatory and offensive gender-based terms to describe women and commented about the sexual activities of women. The complaint also alleges that, despite the county’s receipt of multiple complaints about the harassment, the county repeatedly failed to take prompt and appropriate corrective action to stop the harassment.

Under the terms of the settlement, approved by the federal court in New Mexico, the county must offer to pay \$150,000, divided among the five female victims, to compensate them for their emotional suffering resulting from the harassment. The settlement also requires that the county make additional changes to its policies and procedures related to discrimination, including changes related to reporting and investigating complaints of discrimination and disciplining offenders and individuals who receive reports of discrimination but fail to take appropriate action. The county must ensure that policies and procedures related to discrimination are accessible to Spanish-speaking employees, as well as take additional steps to ensure that all employees are provided appropriate anti-discrimination training.

“It is critical that employers understand what constitutes sexual harassment, and that they take allegations of harassment seriously,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The Civil Rights Division is committed to ensuring that all individuals are able to exercise their right to report to workplaces that are free of harassment, and that employers who become aware of harassment within their ranks root it out promptly.”

The division was assisted in its litigation of this case by the New Mexico U.S. Attorney’s Office. The division’s lawsuit and underlying investigation in this case were prompted by an investigation and referral by the El Paso Area Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Additional information about the Civil Rights Division is available on its Web site at www.justice.gov/crt. Additional information about Title VII and how to file a complaint of discrimination can be found on the Justice Department Web site at www.justice.gov/crt/emp/.

###

10-332

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE CONTACTS IN THE MESSAGE OR CALL THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT 202-514-2007.