

Retaliation Remains Most Frequent Allegation Among Federal-Sector Discrimination Complaints



Article By

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WASHINGTON – Federal employees and applicants filed 17,583 complaints of employment discrimination during fiscal year 2010, a 3.75 percent increase over the previous year, according to the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) Annual Report on the Federal Work Force Part I: EEO Complaints Processing for Fiscal Year 2010. The report, issued today, assesses federal agencies’ equal employment opportunity complaints program statistics. The full text of the report is available on the agency’s web site at <http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/reports/fsp2010/index.cfm>.

As with private sector charges of discrimination, retaliation was the most common allegation of discrimination, and registered a 2.7 percent increase over the prior fiscal year. Age and race (African-American) discrimination were the next most frequently alleged bases and each registered 5.1 percent increases. Federal

employees and applicants are also protected against employment discrimination on the bases of color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, equal pay and genetic information.

“The federal government should be a model workplace,” said Dexter Brooks, director of the EEOC’s Federal Sector Programs. “We are concerned that retaliation is the most common basis of discrimination alleged and we caution all federal agencies to make sure that reprisals do not become the usual response to complaints of discrimination.”

Unlike in the private sector, where the EEOC investigates and processes charges of discrimination, federal agencies themselves are responsible for handling complaints of discrimination filed against them. The average processing time for conducting investigations dropped from 185 days in FY 2009 to 181 days in FY 2010; however, the average processing time for closing complaints increased from 344 days to 360 days. Of the 7,053 cases closed on the merits, 3.3 percent resulted in findings of unlawful discrimination. Additionally, the parties entered into settlements in 3,623 complaints or 21.2 percent of the total complaint closures.

Part II of the report, assessing equal employment opportunity throughout the federal work force, including trends in work force composition, will be published later this year.

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