

# EEOC Sues KASCO for Discrimination and Retaliation Against Muslim Employee



Article By

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Saturday, August 20, 2016

## ***Termination of Employee Violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Federal Agency Says***

KASCO, LLC, a St. Louis company which manufactures and sells butcher supplies and meat processing equipment, violated federal law by discriminating against an employee because of her adherence to Islam and her Afghan descent, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today. EEOC also alleged KASCO retaliated against her when she complained about the discriminatory treatment.

According to EEOC's lawsuit, Latifa Sidiqi had worked for KASCO since 2008, most recently as a buyer. After she began more seriously practicing her religion in 2012, a supervisor and others began making derogatory comments about her fasting during

Ramadan, wearing a hijab, and her native country, Afghanistan. The agency charged that Sidiqi was fired during Ramadan 2013 because of her religion and national origin, and because she complained about her supervisor's treatment.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits religious discrimination and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to employees' sincerely held religious beliefs so long as this does not pose an undue hardship.

EEOC filed its lawsuit (*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. KASCO, LLC.*, Civil Action No. 4:16-cv-1333) in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, in St. Louis, after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. EEOC seeks monetary relief and an order requiring KASCO to implement policies and practices to prevent future discrimination.

"Federal law has protected employees against mistreatment because of their religion and national origin for over 50 years," said James R. Neely, Jr., director of EEOC's St. Louis District Office. "Protecting workers like Ms. Sidiqi when employers violate the law is central to our mission."

Andrea G. Baran, EEOC's regional attorney in St. Louis, said, "Although Ms. Sidiqi's attempt to put a stop to the illegal discrimination she was facing should have been met with empathy and swift corrective action, it instead ended in her firing. Employers need to remember that Title VII not only protects employees from underlying discrimination, it also protects them against retaliation when they complain."

EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. The St. Louis District Office oversees Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and a portion of southern Illinois. Further information about EEOC is available on its website at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov).

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