

Massimo Zanetti sued by EEOC for sexual harassment, retaliation

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ORFOLK, Va. –Massimo Zanetti Beverage USA, Inc. violated federal civil rights law when it failed to stop sexual harassment of a female employee and then fired her because she complained about the harassment, the U.S.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit filed on Sept. 19.



According to the EEOC's complaint, LaToya Young had been employed at Massimo Zanetti's roasting facility in Suffolk, Va., about two weeks when a male co-worker began sexually harassing her in February 2015. The harassment included requests for sex and sexual favors, as well as other crude sexual comments and gestures. According to the EEOC, Young reported the harassment to her supervisor on at least three occasions. Despite her complaints, the harassment continued. Shortly after her third complaint about the sexual harassment, Young was fired for an alleged performance issue. The EEOC contends that Young's performance was not the reason for her discharge, but rather was in retaliation for her complaints about sexual harassment.

The EEOC brought the suit under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits sexual harassment and retaliation against employees who complain about it. The EEOC sued after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The case (EEOC v. Massimo Zanetti

Beverage USA, Inc., Civil Action No. 2:17-CV-00499-HCM-DEM) was filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Norfolk Division on September 18, 2017.

The EEOC is seeking full relief, including back pay, reinstatement, compensatory damages, punitive damages and injunctive relief.

“Employers must remember they are obligated to take prompt remedial action when they learn about sexual harassment in the workplace,” said Lynette A. Barnes, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Charlotte District Office. “This case is also a reminder that a company must not retaliate after receiving a sexual harassment complaint.”

According to publicly available information, Massimo Zanetti, which is headquartered in Portsmouth, Va., is part of the Massimo Zanetti Beverage Group, which does over \$1 billion of business annually and claims to be the largest private company in the coffee industry.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination.

For more information on the EEOC, [click here](#).

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