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July 10, 2025

### **EEOC Preys on Religious Discrimination**

EEOC Acting Chair Andrea Lucas has emphasized that a priority focus for the agency is discrimination based on religion, which includes harassment because of religion. On June 27, 2025, in the Northern District of Illinois, the EEOC sued Omni Hotels for religious discrimination and retaliation, alleging that when an employee requested a scheduling accommodation due to his religious beliefs, the hotel denied his request and reduced his working hours, resulting in a constructive discharge. On June 4, 2025, in the Middle District of Florida, the EEOC sued Cemex Construction Materials Florida, LLC, alleging that it terminated a female employee after denying her request to wear a skirt over her pants for religious reasons.

Religious discrimination charges often involve a claim that the employer failed to accommodate religious beliefs or practices, or took negative action against an employee or applicant after a request to accommodate, regardless of whether the request was granted or not. Examples of potential reasonable accommodation include scheduling adjustments, alterations to dress code (unless safety is impacted), providing spaces for prayer, and, sometimes, job reassignments. An employer would have to show “undue hardship” as a basis for inability to accommodate, which usually focuses on costs. [According to the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decision in \*Groff v. DeJoy\*](#), the increase in costs must be “substantial” in relation to the employer’s overall business—a challenging standard to meet.

Religious discrimination also includes harassment, and the EEOC has promised to focus on eradicating antisemitism. Acting Chair Lucas committed that the Agency will hold accountable colleges and universities who do not adequately address antisemitism on campus work areas. Lucas stated that “In the wake of the October 7, 2023, Hamas terror attacks in Israel, news coverage of the severe outbreaks of antisemitism at our country’s leading universities focused on the students affected...But universities are workplaces, too, and large-scale employers. In addition to Jewish professors on campus, universities employ Jewish staff who work a variety of jobs, all of whom have the right not to be discriminated against or harassed on the basis of religion, national origin, or race.”

In a report, “The State of Antisemitism in America 2024,” 33% of American Jews said they were the target of antisemitism in person or virtually during 2024. 50% of American Jews said they altered their behavior out of a fear of antisemitism. According to the Anti-Defamation League, “anti-Jewish sentiments are at an all-time high globally,” with a recent report that 46% of adults globally “harbor deeply entrenched antisemitic attitudes.” Employer anti-harassment training often focuses on sexual and racial harassment. Be sure to include religion and national origin.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Richard Lehr at 205-323-9260 or [rlehr@lehrmiddlebrooks.com](mailto:rlehr@lehrmiddlebrooks.com).