

May 13, 2019

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT WITH BOLINGBROOK WAREHOUSE OVER CLAIMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul announced a consent decree with MTIL, Inc. to settle claims of widespread sexual harassment, discrimination, and retaliation at the company's Bolingbrook warehouse.

The consent decree settles a lawsuit the Attorney General's office filed in May 2018 in the Will County Circuit Court alleging that MTIL's female workers were subjected to pervasive sexual harassment in the workplace, including unwelcome sexual advances and sexually explicit comments. The lawsuit further alleged that MTIL requested temporary workers from various staffing agencies on the basis of their sex, using the code words "heavy" for male workers and "light" for female workers.

In addition to this consent decree, Raoul's office previously reached consent decrees with IFCO Systems US, a former operator of the warehouse; and ClearStaff, Inc., a temporary staffing agency that provided workers to the warehouse, for their involvement in related incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination.

"A workplace culture that subjects female employees to harassment and bases hiring decisions on a worker's sex is not just repugnant – it is illegal," Raoul said. "This consent decree will end MTIL's unacceptable hiring practices and treatment of female employees."

The consent decree with MTIL prohibits the company from allowing any form of sexual harassment, sex-based employment discrimination, or retaliation in the workplace. It also requires MTIL to establish a third-party-administered hotline that allows all MTIL employees and temporary workers to report incidents of sexual harassment and sex discrimination. MTIL must also implement new anti-discrimination policies and regularly train all employees on those policies. An independent monitor will monitor compliance with the consent decree for the next three years. Additionally, MTIL is required to pay \$75,000 in civil penalties.

The Attorney General's office began investigating the companies' employment practices in 2016 after Warehouse Workers for Justice, a workers' rights center in Joliet, contacted the Attorney General's office to relay multiple worker complaints. Together, the consent decrees will foster positive working conditions at the warehouse and ensure equal job opportunities for temporary workers regardless of their sex.

Attorney General Raoul is committed to protecting Illinois workers' rights and ensuring that workplaces are free from harassment and discrimination. Raoul has sponsored legislation to establish the Worker Protection Unit within the Attorney General's office, which will be dedicated to enforcing violations of worker protection laws. Raoul also provided testimony before the Congressional House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education subcommittee about state-level efforts to respond to the crisis of wage theft and the importance of the federal government as a partner in these efforts.

Raoul encourages workers who have experienced workplace harassment and discrimination to contact the Attorney General's office online or through the Civil Rights Hotline at 1-877-581-3692.

Special Litigation Bureau Chief Jeanne Witherspoon, Civil Rights Bureau Chief Shareese Pryor, and Assistant Attorneys General Christian Arizmendi, Lauren Barski, Matthew Chimienti, Cynthia Flores and Alicia Weber handled the case for Raoul's office.