

- **EEOC v. Blockbuster, Inc.**

No. CIV 04 2007 PHX FJM (D. Ariz. June 8, 2005)

The Phoenix District Office alleged in this Title VII case that Blockbuster, a video rental chain, failed to provide a reasonable accommodation for a 17-year-old part-time customer service representative who consistent with his Jewish religious beliefs wore a yarmulke. Charging party was hired at a Blockbuster store in Phoenix in November 2002. On his second day of work, defendant's Regional Manager told him that wearing the yarmulke violated defendant's dress code, which prohibits headwear, and that he had to remove the yarmulke or leave. Charging party was forced to compromise his religious beliefs by working without his yarmulke for approximately 2 months. Upon receiving charging party's EEOC charge, defendant told him he could resume wearing his yarmulke.

Under the 2-year consent decree resolving this case, charging party will receive \$50,000 in monetary relief. A Blockbuster senior human resources official will send a letter to charging party expressing regret for any failure to accommodate his request for a religious accommodation. All of the injunctive relief provisions in the decree apply to defendant's Phoenix-area facilities and some also apply to facilities in Scottsdale, Arizona. The decree prohibits defendant from discriminating against Phoenix- area employees based their religious beliefs and requires it to accommodate those employees' religious beliefs. The decree also requires defendant to train its Phoenix employees, as well as other employees with direct human resources responsibilities for Phoenix and Scottsdale employees, regarding the duty to provide religious accommodation. Finally, at each of its Scottsdale and Phoenix facilities defendant will: (1) post a notice informing employees that Title VII prohibits discrimination based on religion as well as retaliation and advising them of the right to file a discrimination charge; and (2) amend its Employee Handbook and Standard Operating Procedures to provide for exceptions to the Dress and Grooming Standards to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs.