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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1998
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SCHOOL CITY OF EAST CHICAGO TO SETTLE CLAIMS OF EMPLOYMENT

DISCRIMINATION, UNDER JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AGREEMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Female janitors who worked in a Northern Indiana school district will be compensated for not being able to work the same number of hours as male janitors, under an agreement reached today with the Justice Department.

The agreement, filed along with a complaint in U.S. District Court in Hammond, resolves allegations brought by five women who worked as janitors with the School City of East Chicago, Indiana. The women alleged that the School City, which the district is known as, discriminated against female janitors by not allowing them to work eight hour shifts, like male janitors. The complaint alleged that the School City followed the practice of limiting the hours of female janitors from at least 1988 until 1994. The women lost hourly earnings from \$5 to approximately \$11 per shift.

"Women in the workforce should get the chance to work the same number of hours and make as much money as men," said Bill Lann Lee, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. "Depriving women the opportunity to work an eight hour shift meant less income for them and their families."

Under the agreement, the School City will create a fund of \$250,000 to compensate any women who lost money as a result of the practice and pay the private attorney for the five women. It is estimated that more than 50 women will be eligible for backpay through this settlement.

The five women originally filed their complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which, after unsuccessfully trying to conciliate the matter, referred it to the Justice Department.

This is the sixth case filed by the Justice Department since 1993, alleging that women have not been given equal access to higher paying custodial jobs in public schools. Typically, women have been denied these jobs or paid less than men in these positions because of the false impression that women cannot perform some of the physical tasks required of custodians.

"By bringing these cases, we are taking steps to stop these practices, compensate victims, and ensure that employers judge job applicants and employees by their actual capabilities, not by their gender," added Mr. Lee.

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