

*The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*

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## LIQUOR IMPORTER TO PAY \$2.6 MILLION IN SETTLEMENT OF SEX HARASSMENT LAWSUIT

### **\*\*\* Largest EEOC Monetary Settlement for Sexual Harassment in New York State \*\*\***

New York City -- In a consent decree obtained by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) New York District Office, Sidney Frank Importing Co. Inc. and All State Promotions Inc. ("Sidney Frank Importers"), distributors of Jagermeister and Grey Goose Vodka, agreed to pay \$2,600,000 to conclude a lawsuit which alleged that more than 100 female employees were subjected to acts of sexual harassment by President and owner Sidney Frank as well as by other management employees and customers.

This case resolves a lawsuit filed in U.S. Southern District Court that EEOC based upon allegations of sexual harassment by employees and claims of retaliation for complaining about the harassment. In addition, EEOC alleged that Sidney Frank Importers had instituted a restrictive mandatory arbitration policy to evade the law.

This settlement demonstrates a mutual effort by EEOC and Sidney Frank Importers to resolve workplace harassment. In addition to providing a Claims Fund that offers damages to aggrieved employees, through the Consent Decree, Sidney Frank Importers will take notable steps to provide greater protection from workplace harassment. There will be a 24-hour toll free number that employees can call, training for all supervisors, and a comprehensive Policy Against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment. Sidney Frank Importers has also abandoned its requirement that employees arbitrate claims of discrimination.

Claimants will be notified of the settlement and given an opportunity to apply for monetary relief. All money in the claims fund will be allocated to victims of discrimination. Eligible claimants are those individuals who were employed by Sidney Frank Importers between July 1, 1993 and the Court's approval of the Fairness Hearing, and who submit credible evidence that subsequent to July 1, 1993, they were subjected to a hostile work environment because of their sex or were retaliated against for complaining about sexual harassment or the requirement to sign the arbitration agreement.

"Employees are entitled to work in a workplace free of sexual harassment and differential treatment based on sex. The EEOC will seek full relief against employers who discriminate," said Spencer H. Lewis, EEOC's New York District Director. "This is an important resolution not only because of the amount of the compensation but also because of the cooperation between Sidney Frank Importing Co. and the EEOC in reaching this agreement. I hope that other employers will follow Sidney Frank Importing Co.'s lead in taking the necessary steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace and provide a remedy for those who have been victims of discrimination."

The EEOC enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, which protects workers 40 and older; the Equal Pay Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; prohibitions against discrimination affecting persons with disabilities in the federal government; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Further information about the Commission is available on the agency's web site ([www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)).

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