



Department of Justice

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Sexual Harassment of Customers Alleged Against Mississippi Bank and Former Employee

WASHINGTON—The Justice Department today announced the filing of a lawsuit alleging that a former vice president of the First National Bank of Pontotoc, Miss., engaged in a pattern of sexual harassment against female borrowers and applicants for credit. The lawsuit represents the first sexual harassment lawsuit filed by the Justice Department under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

"Sexual harassment is against the law and will not be tolerated in the lending industry," said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "The lawsuit filed today is part of a continuing effort by the Department of Justice to enforce every aspect of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act."

In its complaint, filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, the Justice Department alleges that William W. Anderson used his position as a vice president to subject women who applied for or obtained credit from the First National Bank of Pontotoc to severe and pervasive sexual harassment. The complaint alleges that Anderson's conduct included making offensive comments, engaging in unwanted sexual touching, and requesting or demanding sexual favors from female customers over a period of years before his employment with the Bank ended in May 2004. The complaint also alleges that the Bank is legally responsible for the sexual harassment.

The complaint seeks an order requiring the First National Bank of Pontotoc and William W. Anderson to stop discriminating against individuals on the basis of sex in connection with credit transactions, implement a policy against the sexual harassment of credit customers, and pay monetary damages for the victims. The First National Bank of Pontotoc is an institution that focuses on residential real estate and consumer loans. The Bank's portfolio includes approximately 9,600 loans with a value of \$151.5 million.

Any individuals who believe that they were harassed in connection with their dealings with the First National Bank of Pontotoc, or anyone else who has information concerning this case, should contact the Justice Department's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section at 1-800-896-7743 and select menu option four.

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