

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

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EEOC, Quietflex Manufacturing Company, L.P., and Others Announce Final Approval of Settlement with Hispanic Employees on Discrimination Claims

HOUSTON – U.S. District Judge Lee Rosenthal granted final approval yesterday to the settlement of discrimination claims against Quietflex Manufacturing Company, L.P. (the company). Under the terms of the settlement, the company's insurer will pay \$2.8 million to 78 current and former Latino employees. In addition, the company has agreed to implement policies and practices to advance equal employment opportunity.

The lawsuit was filed in October 2001 when 78 Latino employees, represented by the Mexican American Legal Defense And Educational Fund, Inc. (MALDEF), sued the company, claiming that it discriminated against them based on their national origin in its transfer and compensation policies. The suit alleged that Latinos were denied entry into a department with jobs which were higher-paying and had better working conditions than the departments in which Latinos worked. They further alleged retaliation based on their terminations stemming from a work stoppage in January 2000. All employees were rehired shortly thereafter. Based on an assertion that the case raised issues of general public importance, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) intervened as an additional plaintiff shortly after the suit was filed.

The company, which produces flexible air conditioning ducts and component products, has denied, and continues to deny, all of the allegations in the lawsuit.

The settlement covers all outstanding claims. In reaching a settlement, the parties have avoided the inconvenience, cost and inherent uncertainty of trial. As the case has been settled and no trial was held, the court made no findings about liability.

"Our office investigated the claims that gave rise to the lawsuit," said Regional Attorney James Sacher of the EEOC's Houston District Office. "The improvement in promotional and transfer prospects for Hispanic workers and the payment of compensation to settlement group members is gratifying, as it shows the efficacy of our civil rights enforcement program."

Gerald L. Maatman, Jr., trial counsel at Seyfarth Shaw LLP, said: "While we were fully prepared to present this case at trial, and stand by our position that our client has always followed the laws and regulations related to equal opportunity employment, we are very pleased with this result for our client. This settlement is a fair conclusion for all involved."

This page was last modified on January 24, 2007.



[Return to Home Page](#)