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JUSTICE at HERSHEY'S

EEOC v. Signal International, LLC

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EEOC v. Signal International, LLC, 11-cv-00179, U.S. Dist. Ct., S.D. Miss. (filed April 2011)

(EEOC April 20 2011 complaint)

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sued Signal International, LLC, charging that the Gulf of Mexico marine services company violated federal law by subjecting a class of approximately 500 Indian employees to human labor trafficking and a hostile work environment. The affected workers are H-2B guestworkers trafficked to work as welders and pipefitters in the marine fabrication industry.

The EEOC lawsuit charges that Signal subjected the Indian employees as a class to abuse based on national origin (Indian) and/or race (Asian). The agency charges Signal with disparate, discriminatory treatment concerning the workers' terms and conditions of employment, as well as segregating them. Finally, the EEOC lawsuit alleges Signal retaliated against workers who opposed Signal's unlawful conduct.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits national origin and race discrimination and retaliation for opposing discriminatory practices. The EEOC filed its lawsuit in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, Southern Division, in Gulfport (*EEOC v. Signal International, LLC* Civ. No. ____ after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process. The EEOC seeks compensatory and punitive damages for the class members and injunctive relief, including training for Signal on national origin and race discrimination and retaliation.

"The injustice here towards Indian workers solicited to come to the United States violated the mandates of federal law," said Delner Franklin-Thomas, district director for the Birmingham District Office. "Employers cannot avoid anti-discrimination laws by seeking to hire workers from other countries."

C. Emanuel Smith, regional attorney for the EEOC's Birmingham District Office, added, "Title VII clearly protects employees recruited to work in the United States from unlawful discriminatory practices. The EEOC is committed to ensuring a workplace free from unlawful discrimination for all workers in this country. This litigation is a step in that direction."

According to company information, Signal is a leading Gulf of Mexico provider of marine and fabrication services, including new construction, heavy fabrication and offshore drilling rig and ship overhaul, repair, upgrade and conversion. The company employs more than 1,500 people. Signal's corporate offices are in Mobile, Ala., with production facilities in Pascagoula, Miss., and Orange, Texas.

Tags: [eEOC](#), [indian workers](#), [lawsuit](#), [signal international](#)

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