

Important Information for Workers: California Supreme Court Decision Helps Ensure Workers Can Bring Racial Harassment Claims

The California Supreme Court recently made an important decision regarding workplace harassment. The case, *Bailey vs. San Francisco District's Attorney Office et. al*, involved Ms. Bailey, a Black woman, who worked at the San Francisco District Attorney's Office. Bailey sued her employer because a coworker used a racial slur—the N-word—toward her. Although the incident happened only once, Bailey argued that it created a hostile work environment.

Previously, courts often dismissed such cases if the harassment was a one-time event or if the person responsible was not a supervisor. However, in a significant win for workers, the California Supreme Court ruled that even a single use of a severe racial slur can be enough to bring a harassment lawsuit under California law. The court emphasized that the impact of such words should be judged from the perspective of the person targeted, considering the broader context in which it occurred.

This decision is significant because it lowers the threshold for what counts as actionable harassment. It sends a clear message to employers that they must take all complaints about racial slurs seriously, regardless of how many times it happens or who says it. The ruling aims to ensure that employees can bring their cases to court and seek justice for any severe discriminatory behavior they experience at work.

Overall, this decision strengthens protections for workers in California, making it easier for them to hold employers accountable for maintaining a respectful and discrimination-free workplace.

For more information about this case visit: legallaidatwork.org/bailey

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