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JUSTICE NEWS**Department of Justice**

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**Justice Department Settles Immigration-Related Discrimination
Claim Against North Carolina Company**

The Justice Department announced today that it reached an agreement with Gamewell Mechanical Inc., a subsidiary of Woodfin Heating, Inc. based in Salisbury, N.C., resolving claims that the company violated the anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), when it terminated three employees based on the incorrect assumption that they were undocumented foreign nationals when they were in fact U.S. citizens. The company is in the mechanical construction business and fabricates and installs heating and cooling systems.

The investigation stemmed from a charge filed by one of the three U.S. citizens. The investigation revealed that Gamewell officials had terminated the three individuals when it received information that six of their co-workers were undocumented foreign nationals and incorrectly assumed that the three U.S. citizens were similarly not authorized to work in the United States.

Under the settlement agreement, Gamewell Mechanical will pay a total of \$10,560 in back pay to the three discharged U.S. citizens, and \$9,600 in civil penalties to the United States. Gamewell Mechanical will also train its human resources staff about employers' responsibilities to avoid discrimination in the employment eligibility verification process and be subject to reporting and compliance monitoring by the department for 18 months.

"The anti-discrimination provision protects work-authorized individuals from being treated differently in employment based on discriminatory assumptions about their status," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "The Civil Rights Division is fully committed to vigorously enforcing the law."

The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices is responsible for enforcing the INA's anti-discrimination provision of the INA, which, among other things, protects work-authorized individuals from employment discrimination on the basis of citizenship status or national origin discrimination in connection with hiring, firing, and the employment eligibility verification process.

For more information about protections against employment discrimination under the immigration laws, call the OSC's worker hotline at 1-800-255-7688 or the OSC's employer hotline at 1-800-255-8155. TDD for hearing impaired is 800-237-2515. You may also sign up for a no-cost webinar at www.justice.gov/crt/osc/webinars.php, email oscrcrt@usdoj.gov or visit the website at www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc.

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Civil Rights Division