JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

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Justice Department Settles Allegations of Immigration-Related Employment Discrimination Against Summit Steel Fabricators in Houston

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today reached a settlement agreement with Summit Steel Fabricators Inc. in Houston resolving allegations that the company engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination against non-citizens in the employment eligibility verification process. According to the department's findings, the company had a policy of requiring newly hired workers who are not U.S. citizens to present specific documentation, such as a permanent resident card or resident alien card, even if they had already presented other documents sufficient to establish their employment eligibility under federal law. U.S. citizens, by contrast, were not required to present any specific documents.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, Summit Steel will alter its practices to ensure that citizens and non-citizens are treated equally in the employment eligibility verification process, and pay a civil penalty of $15,400. Summit Steel has also agreed to train its human resources personnel about employers' responsibilities to avoid discrimination in the employment eligibility verification process, to produce Forms I-9 for inspection, and to provide periodic reports to the Department for three years.

"Employers have a responsibility to conduct the employment eligibility verification process in a non-discriminatory manner, and all workers have the right to look for work without facing discrimination based on their citizenship status," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "We are pleased to have reached a settlement in this matter, and we look forward to continuing to work with all employers to educate them about their obligations under federal law."

The Civil Rights Division's Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices (OSC) is responsible for enforcing the anti-discrimination provision of the INA, which protects work-authorized individuals against discrimination in hiring, firing and recruitment or referral for a fee on the basis of citizenship status and national origin. The INA also protects all work-authorized individuals from discrimination in the employment eligibility verification process and from retaliation.

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For more information about protections against employment discrimination under federal immigration law, call OSC's worker hotline at 1-800-255-7688 (1-800-237-2515, TDD for hearing impaired), OSC's employer hotline at 1-800-255-8155 (1-800-237-2515, TDD for hearing impaired), or 202-616-5594; e-mail osccrt@usdoj.gov; or visit OSC's website at www.justice.gov/crt/about/osc.

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