

HRM532: FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN RESOURCES - CHAPTER 4 CASE STUDY

Lord of the Fries, a casual burger chain with restaurants throughout the country has been charged by the EEOC with refusing to accommodate the religious needs of an employee and then illegally firing him.

The suit alleges that the restaurant refused to offer Ethan Bunn, a server at the restaurant, any accommodation for his Kemetic religion, an ancient Egyptian faith. As part of his practice, Bunn went through a rite of passage where he received religious inscriptions in the form of tattoos. The inscriptions, less than a quarter-inch wide and encircling his wrists, are a verse from an Egyptian scripture and are written in a liturgical Egyptian language. The inscriptions symbolize his dedication and servitude and his beliefs make it a sin to intentionally conceal the religious inscriptions.

Bunn had the religious inscriptions on his wrists when he was hired at Lord of the Fries. The restaurant has a dress code policy that prohibits employees from having visible tattoos. After a short while, management noticed the tattoos and asked him to conceal them in accordance with the policy. It should be noted that Bunn signed a Handbook Acknowledgment that included the Dress Code Policy. Bunn claimed that he had multiple conversations with management, giving "lengthy explanations" about his faith and need for accommodation. He sought an exemption from the dress code, but the restaurant refused to provide it or any alternatives. He was told by management, "if you cannot cover the tattoos it would be better if you seek employment elsewhere."

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to sincerely held religious beliefs unless it would cause undue hardship to the business. Throughout the suit, Lord of the Fries maintained that allowing any exceptions to its dress code policy would undermine its "wholesome image" and adversely affect customer relations. The restaurant claimed that covering the tattoos was a BFOQ.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Make an argument for BOTH, the employer and employee?
2. Do you feel that there is religious discrimination in this case?
3. If you are HR, what do you decide?

Answer

Make an argument for BOTH, the employer and employee?

In this world, we are born and created to be equal. We have to respect each other no matter where and who we are. In this case scenario, there is a religious issue between Ethan Bunn and his employer. Let's start with Ethan Bunn, who is an employee of Lord of the Fries has been discriminated against for his religion. Based on the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) who is responsible for upholding government regulations that make it illicit to oppress a task candidate or a representative due to the individual's race, shading, religion, sex (counting pregnancy, transsexual status, and sexual direction), public beginning, age (40 or older),