

MARYLOU'S POLICY OF HIRING ATTRACTIVE YOUNG GIRLS UNDER EEOC SCANNER



The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is investigating Marylou, for allegations that it only employed good looking, young female workers. The South Shore coffee chain, is, however, livid over the allegations, claiming that the government is targeting its traditional practice of hiring youthful stunning girls to market the stores wares. In a statement to Eyewitness News, a spokesman for Marylou said, "The implication in this report is absolutely false. We hire only the most qualified applicants...and those qualifications begin and end with a winning personality and a passion for customer service." The EEOC has taken the discrimination allegations seriously and have been stealthily probing Marylou's hiring patterns for almost a year. The investigators have collected considerable evidence; including reams of job applications. They have interviewed many people, including the company's top officers. Based on tough cross examination from the company's worker, the feds have a pile of information, regarding the workers gender, age, race and body type. The company is popular for its hiring of young attractive women, wearing the company's trademark pink T-shirts, black shorts, singing and dancing in their television commercials. The executives of the company staunchly deny allegations of discrimination and are calling it a witch hunt. Marylou Sandry appealed for help to state Sen. John F. Keenan (D-Quincy), telling him, "We have never had a complaint against us for age discrimination or any kind of discrimination. We feel that the EEOC is on a witch hunt." However, Keenan said that he would not intrude in the federal agency's ongoing investigation. Sandra would not comment on Keenan decision, but added, "I don't want to say anything. I just want it to be over with." The vice president Ronnie Sandry of the company, told the Herald that Marylou's hiring comes from applicants, who normally are heavily white South Shore. We have a restricted pool of applicants; from where we have to choose our workers. That they are young and beautiful is something over which the company has no control "When you're hiring a police officer, certain people show up," she said. "When you're hiring a Patriots cheerleader, certain people show up. When we're hiring, certain people apply, and we have no control over it." Katherine J. Michon, a Boston lawyer, a discrimination case specialist says, the way the feds are taking their time over it and scrutinizing the minutest of details, suggests that they are serious about nailing the company. "It sounds like they're trying to explore every possible protected category to see if there is a race-discrimination case, a sex-discrimination case or an age-discrimination case ... whether people are being chosen for the position because they're white, young and female," Michon said. According to Sandry, the EEOC officials told that the investigations were initiated following Marylou's stimulating TV spots, in which sprightly young girls, cavort about, and sing the company's jingle, claiming that the company's roast is "the best coffee in town." Sandry said the selling point is fun — not sex. "Attractive is in the eye of the beholder. They're just all fun, upbeat girls," he said. "It's the personality. It's the way you're treated. That's what we reach out for. It's all shapes and sizes and colors." Marylou has also protested the probe to state Senator Robert L. Hedlund, who lambasted the EEOC as "a meddlesome, overblown, intrusive federal agency." Hedlund said he intended to contact the local congressional delegation, and is amazed the agency is probing the iconic South Shore coffee shop. "Why, because they haven't hired old overweight men who want to wear a pink T-shirt and serve coffee?" Hedlund said. "The federal government has better things to do with my tax dollars." Marylou's customers were all siding with the coffee shop. "This is what they do. They hire pretty girls to help sell coffee," said Heather, 27, of Dorchester, "Pepsi will hire celebrities to help their business, tanning salons put pictures of girls in bikinis out to help them sell their business. I don't see how this is any different." However, experts say, businesses whose brands rely on employee image, like Marylou's — are bound by the same employment laws that govern other workplaces. Employment attorney Inga Bernstein said, "They have to follow the same rules as every employer, which is, they're not permitted to discriminate," "When you think about the airline industry, stewardesses — now called flight attendants — had to be a certain age, gender, body type. And people saw that as discriminatory." "You're permitted to hire people who are attractive if there's a legitimate business reason for it," attorney David Belfort said. "What you can't do is exclude people of a certain age or gender unless there's a legitimate business reason for it. If you've got an attendant in the women's locker room, that's legitimate and you're allowed to do it. If you're serving coffee, I would think men could serve coffee adequately." Marylou's operates 6 locations in Rhode Island, including East Greenwich, East Providence, Smithfield, Johnston, Scituate, and North Providence.