

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND SEX DISCRIMINATION



A recent announcement was made by the Justice Department in which they have stated that they will be intervening in a private lawsuit, *Hawkins v. Summit County, Ohio*. The lawsuit is private and allegations have been made that sex discrimination has taken place within the Summit County area in Ohio, as well as from the Sheriff of Summit County as well. The complaint alleges that the sheriff of the county discriminated on multiple women, a total of twenty deputy sheriffs, all of whom have filed discrimination charges against him and the department with the EEOC, also known as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The complaint states that at the beginning of the year, back in January of 2012, the county as well as the sheriff assigned jobs that were segregated by sex within the Summit County Jail, which is located in Akron, Ohio. Before the beginning of 2012, all female deputies had the opportunity to work different jobs that related to security function, regardless of their gender. However, the job assignment system was updated and under new rules, female deputies became limited to the types of tasks they could take on that involved security-related aspects of the job, including only being allowed to supervise female inmates. Because female deputies were only allowed to supervise female prisoners, the vast majority of deputies lost time from work because there were not enough shifts available. The complaint asks that the sheriff and the county as a whole work on a job assignment system that would not cause this dilemma for the female deputies, as they should not be discriminated on due to their gender. The twenty female deputies are also asking for monetary relief due to damages that they dealt with because of the discrimination against them. The Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division, Thomas E. Perez, says that the Department of Justice does not stand for any sort of discrimination period and will not allow the county to discriminate on these deputies simply because they are female. Perez points out that the Civil Rights Division is partnered up with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and says that with their partnership, they are able to ensure that employers are following the right protocol and are not discriminating against their employees at all. Perez says that the EEOC works hard to ensure employees are all treated as equals and are not discriminated on based on gender or anything else. They are committed to ensuring that the county and sheriff work with these female deputies, along with providing them with monetary relief, so that they can work within the positions they were working before without being discriminated on simply because they are women.

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