

## WAITRESS FILES LAWSUIT OVER SKIMPY DRESS CODE



O'Hara's a popular bar in Westwood is facing a civil lawsuit. A former employee, Courtney Scaramella, filed a complaint in the Los Angeles Superior Court on May 24, against the establishment last month, alleging sexual harassment, wrongful termination and unpaid wages. Co-owner Jack Bendetti and general manager Ronald "Ram" McDonnell are also facing Scaramella's ire, she is also suing them along with the bar and asking to be compensated for lost wages and the stress she underwent. Courtney Scaramella, 23, who had been employed by O'Hara's bar in Westwood, Calif., as a waitress since 2008, is claiming she was fired for complaining about the bar's new dress code-- one that required her to wear a plaid schoolgirl-style skirt held together with Velcro. She said that she feared that drunken customers could easily tear off the skirt, secured as it was by Velcro alone. She alleged that when she demonstrated to McDonnell how hard it was to bend in that short skirt, McDonnell alleged smirked and said, "Oh yeah!" in a sexually suggestive manner, the suit states. She alleges, in her suit, that Bendetti objectified the women on staff by insisting that they wear revealing uniforms as a way to improve the bar's bottom line. The complaint also mentions numerous other occasions where Scaramella found Bendetti's behavior offensive. In one such illustration, of Bendetti's offensive behavior, he allegedly required bartenders to rate the charm and beauty of female customers on a scale of one to ten. Women, whom bartenders, rated six or higher were given a free shot of alcohol. Scaramella claims that yet another humiliating aspect of the job was that fans were placed on the floor by the register to blow the skirts up. Her lawyer said that the fans would expose their bottoms. "I was appalled, I was offended, I kind of hoped it was a joke," Scaramella told KNBC-TV. "They had a couple of ideas and this was one of them that they thought would increase foot traffic or something like that. In January, Scaramella, frustrated by the bar's uncompromising dress code, wrote a formal complaint to her manager and Bendetti detailing her aggravation and dissatisfaction over the dress code that forced her to wear the skimpy skirt. Instantaneously, the requirement to wear skirts was done away with. However, with the removal of the dress code, Scaramella's working hours were severely reduced, she was denied posting in shifts that would have brought her higher tips and three days later she was asked to leave. She alleges that her firing was a direct result of her complaint to the bar's managers. Speaking to KTLA, Scaramella said that she was not the only one who felt uncomfortable with the new dress code, "It wasn't fair to me, it wasn't fair to the other girls who were working there. Everyone was offended by it. Nobody wanted to do it, but unfortunately, jobs are hard to come by right now and some people were stuck." In response to this latest suit, an attorney representing the owners of O'Hara's told KTLA that Scaramella was not fired, but that she quit. "She was not fired, she quit," attorney Roger H. Licht told CBS Los Angeles. The establishment ruled out any chance of an out of court settlement. "They plan on fighting this all the way to the end to prove that the claims are baseless." "This will be a hotly contested litigation," Jaramilla said.

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