

Over 60 Women Say They Were Sexually Harassed at IHOP, Applebees

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Photo courtesy of Biz Journals.[/caption]

Summary: Numerous IHOP and Applebees employees have said they were sexually harassed at their restaurants.

In the past year, a few high-profile chefs such as Mario Batali and John Besh were brought down by sexual harassment allegations. These cases exposed an industry-wide problem of inappropriate behavior, and on Wednesday, [Vox](#) revealed that two well-known restaurant chains have been accused dozens of times of being toxic work environments.

According to Vox, more than 60 sexual harassment cases have been filed against IHOP and Applebees since 2010. This number is only a fraction of the 5,000 EEOC complaints filed from 2005 to 2015 in the restaurant industry. The Center for American Progress said that the restaurant industry had the most sexual harassment complaints filed of any other industry.

Laura Palumbo, communications director for the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, told Vox that teenagers or people from low-income often worked in restaurants, and this made them easy targets for predators.

"It may be suggested that they are very replaceable; that because of their status in the workplace, no one will care about their claim or their claim won't make a difference," Palumbo said.

Vox individually named IHOP and Applebees for their number of sexual harassment lawsuits because they were the two restaurants with the most complaints. The lawsuits filed were from women who said they were the subject of groping or sexual requests, and they had sued the individual stores, not the corporate office, who appeared to be unaware of its franchises legal battles.

One plaintiff spoke to the publication and said she started working at a St. Louis IHOP when she was a teenager. She said that at first her boss complimented her appearance, which made her uncomfortable, but soon, his behavior escalated to the point where she was terrified to go to work. In her lawsuit, she said that her boss threatened her physical harm if she refused sex with him.

The teenager was not the only alleged victim at that restaurant. She and ten other waitresses filed a lawsuit in 2017 against the franchise owner, saying that they had been harassed by the boss and two cooks with no resolution even after their numerous complaints.

The employees at Applebees around the nation had similar complaints to those at IHOP. Tracy Frye, who filed a complaint with the EEOC, said that her supervisor grabbed her breasts and rubbed his crotch on her during the 10 months she worked there. The EEOC filed a lawsuit on her behalf in May of 2017. Tracy's sister also allegedly experienced harassment, and she said that when she complained to the manager that she did not want to work with the offensive supervisor her request was denied.

Kelly Armstrong, an employment law attorney in San Francisco, told Vox that plaintiffs can sue the corporate office but rarely do because those cases are hard to prove liability. Most sexual harassment cases are filed against the individual franchise owner.

- [Men Who Have Recently Resigned Over Sexual Harassment Allegations](#)
- [All the Men Recently Accused of Sexual Harassment](#)
- [19 Hollywood Power Players Recently Accused of Sexual Harassment](#)

What do you think of Applebees and IHOP? Let us know in the comments below.