

Former DOL Lawyer Alleges Retaliation and Systemic Race Discrimination



In a recent development, Oscar Hampton, a Black former top lawyer at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), has taken legal action against the department, claiming he was unfairly terminated in retaliation for consistently raising concerns about pervasive race discrimination within the organization.

Background: A Decades-Long Career at DOL

Oscar Hampton, who served as a regional solicitor in Philadelphia, was abruptly dismissed in September, prompting him to file a lawsuit in Washington, D.C., federal court. Hampton, who had dedicated over three decades to the DOL, had notably secured a substantial \$22 million award earlier this year in an overtime-pay case, marking one of the largest jury verdicts in the department's history.

Allegations of Systemic Discrimination

The lawsuit highlights a pattern of systemic discrimination faced by Hampton and other Black lawyers at DOL. Allegations include being unfairly labeled as aggressive and intimidating, enduring micromanagement, and facing significant obstacles in securing management positions within the organization.

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Retaliation Amidst Complaints

Hampton contends that, in response to his persistent complaints, an investigation into his management style was launched by his supervisor, ultimately resulting in his termination. The lawsuit asserts that Hampton's firing was not a consequence of his alleged unprofessionalism but rather a reaction to his vocal stance against discrimination.

Impact of Leadership Changes: Keen's Promotion

The discrimination escalated in 2021, according to Hampton, coinciding with the promotion of Stanley Keen, a white regional solicitor, to a deputy solicitor role overseeing regional offices. Hampton alleges that Keen, known for his animosity towards Black employees, directed an investigation that led to the termination, citing Hampton's alleged rudeness and unprofessional behavior.

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Legal Action and Calls for Reform

The lawsuit accuses DOL of race discrimination and retaliation, citing violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Hampton seeks not only monetary damages but also reinstatement to his former position as regional solicitor. Additionally, the legal action calls for a comprehensive review of DOL's anti-discrimination policies and practices, aiming to develop effective measures to prevent bias.

DOL's Response and Future Implications

As of now, the Department of Labor has not issued an immediate response to the allegations. The case, identified as Hampton v. Su, is pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, under case number 1:23-cv-03338.

Legal Representation

Hampton is represented by Michal Shinnar and Jay Holland of Joseph, Greenwald & Laake, underscoring the commitment to pursuing justice in the face of alleged discrimination and retaliation within a government agency.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.