



Press Release

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Judge Rules that Women in Casino Sexual Harassment Case Will Have Their Day in Court

Placer County, CA – Judge Charles D. Wachob ruled on September 22, 2006 that seven female former employees of Thunder Valley Casino, and the class of similarly situated women they seek to represent, will have their sexual harassment and gender discrimination case heard in the Superior Court of Placer County. The Judge denied attempts by Station Casinos, Inc. and Curtis Broome, a former high level manager, to reject the women’s complaint by requesting dismissal of their claims.

“After the painful harassment I went through at work, the ruling makes me feel relieved that I’ll finally have a voice in court,” said Cynthia Walden, one of the named plaintiffs in the case. “I am hopeful that this is the beginning of achieving justice for women at the casino by holding my former employers responsible for failing to protect us from severe sexual harassment and discrimination.”

Since the beginning of this case, the women have sought to hold all the proper parties responsible for failing to prevent sexual harassment and discrimination at Thunder Valley Casino. In addition to Station Casinos, Inc. and Curtis Broome, the plaintiffs named the United Auburn Indian Tribe (“Tribe”) and Thunder Valley Casino as defendants. But these two parties were dismissed from the lawsuit on sovereign immunity grounds – a dismissal that is currently being appealed.

The September 22 ruling thwarted Station Casinos, Inc. attempts to hide behind the Tribe’s sovereign immunity. Station Casinos, Inc. is a multi-million dollar Las Vegas, Nevada gambling management corporation that established, implemented, and oversaw the entire employment and operations policies, practices and procedures at Thunder Valley Casino.

Judge Wachob’s ruling determined that Station Casinos, Inc. was the women’s *de facto* employer. Thus their other employment-related claims, including wage and hour violations, could proceed in state court.

Debra Smith, plaintiffs’ counsel and Senior Staff Attorney at Equal Rights Advocates said, “Station Casinos, Inc. cannot abdicate its responsibilities as a California employer.” Like other corporate entities doing business in California, Smith states “It must comply with state laws and its obligation to protect workers from discrimination and harassment.”

The court also rejected Station Casinos, Inc. and Curtis Broome’s claims that dismissal was required because the Tribe and Thunder Valley Casino were “necessary and indispensable.” The presence of the Tribe in the lawsuit, Judge Wachob determined, was not necessary because it had agreed in its Tribal-State Compact with the State of California “to adopt and implement employment standards no less stringent than those provided by federal and state law.”

Although the Judge noted that the Tribe recently adopted an employment ordinance, this ordinance was only enacted *after* the women brought this litigation. Throughout the entire time the women were employed at Thunder Valley Casino, there was no employment ordinance and no forum to bring their claims of discrimination. The ruling is a significant step toward providing that forum in state court.

Walden said, “I almost cried when I saw the ruling because I was reminded of all the painful things I went through.” Walden alleges that she was denied promotions based on her age and gender and was sexually harassed while working at Thunder Valley Casino. “I was so relieved that after so long, I am finally getting a chance for justice,” said Walden.

The name of the case is *Corinn Medina, et al. v. Station Casinos, Inc., Station California LLC, Station Development LLC, Curtis Broome, and DOES 1-20*, Case No. SCV 18017.

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