

## JUSTICE NEWS

### Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Federal Court Grants Provisional Approval of \$2 Million in Sexual Harassment Lawsuit Against Alabama Sheriff

The Justice Department announced today that the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama has provisionally approved its \$2 million settlement agreement with the Sheriff of Mobile County, Alabama. The agreement, [announced](#) by the department on April 24, resolves the department's lawsuit alleging that female corrections officers at the Mobile County Metro Jail were regularly subjected to severe and pervasive sexual harassment in the workplace by male inmates and that the sheriff's office failed to take prompt and effective action to remedy this harassing conduct as required by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The court's provisional approval means that the parties can begin to implement the agreement, including by providing notice to the current and former employees who have a right to request a monetary award under the agreement. Those individuals will then have an opportunity to submit comments on the settlement, which the court will consider at a fairness hearing on Aug. 25, 2023, before giving final approval to the agreement.

"The Justice Department brought this litigation to bring an end to the hostile work environment faced by women employed at the Mobile County Metro Jail," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The court's action will help ensure that impacted female employees receive the relief that they rightly deserve."

Under the terms of the agreement, the sheriff will pay compensatory damages to plaintiffs named in the lawsuit. The sheriff will also establish a \$1.41 million settlement fund to compensate other women harmed by the discrimination alleged by the department.

- All women who have worked as corrections officers or corporals at the Mobile County Metro Jail at any time between Jan. 1, 2011, and April 21, 2023 are potentially eligible to recover monetary relief under the fund.
- Over the next several weeks, a claims administrator retained by the department will contact women who may be eligible to notify them of the fund and provide specific instructions about next steps, including when they can apply to the fund.
- People with questions about the agreement and claims process can contact the Justice Department at [mcso@usdoj.gov](mailto:mcso@usdoj.gov) or 1-800-556-1950 (option 6).

In addition to the monetary relief, the agreement also requires the sheriff to implement specific changes at the jail to reduce the instances of sexual harassment of female jail employees. These changes are based on recommendations from a corrections expert who has run jails and consulted with dozens of jails throughout the country for over three decades. None of the settlement funds will be used to implement these changes.

This lawsuit is part of the Civil Rights Division's Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Initiative. The initiative is aimed at eradicating sexual harassment in state and local government workplaces. It focuses on litigation, outreach, and development of effective remedial measures to address and prevent future sex discrimination and harassment.

The full and fair enforcement of Title VII is a top priority of the Civil Rights Division's Employment Litigation Section. Additional information about the Civil Rights Division and the Employment Litigation Section is available on its websites [www.justice.gov/crt](http://www.justice.gov/crt) and [www.justice.gov/crt/employment-litigation-section](http://www.justice.gov/crt/employment-litigation-section).

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