

Fair Employment Challenge – Discrimination or Not?

Answers

- 1. Kayla is 20 years old. The interviewer says she is too young for the job.**

There are fair employment laws that protect people aged 40 and older. A few laws cover younger people, including the King County Fair Employment ordinance.

- 2. A sports equipment store hires Michael, who is Black. The manager tells Michael that he was hired to work with the Black customers.**

It is not legal for employers to consider race when deciding what job an employee will do. Michael should be hired for his experience and education, not because of the color of his skin. The store's customers should be helped by and get the same good service from all of the clerks, no matter what their race is.

- 3. Ashley gets a job as a clerk for a tool parts store. On her first day at work, a male co-worker tells her he thinks only guys can do this job.**

Employers can't discriminate against workers because of gender (sex). Being a woman has nothing to do with how well Ashley does her job. The store manager is responsible for making sure that other employees don't treat her badly just because she is female.

- 4. Jose, who is Filipino, was born in the United States. He applies for three promotions. Even though he is well-qualified, non-Filipino employees are promoted instead.**

It might be that the other employees are more qualified than Jose. Still, losing three promotions in a row could make him suspicious that his ancestry might be why he didn't get the jobs. Jose could take his concerns to a civil rights agency.

- 5. Ahmed asks for vacation time for a religious holiday. His boss says no, he can't allow any time off because it is the busy time of the month.**

Employers must accommodate an employee's religious practices and beliefs if they can. Ahmed's boss should allow him to use vacation time unless it would make it hard to do business. Often, another employee can switch work days when there is a religious holiday.

- 6. Sarah's factory foreman often yells and swears at the workers.**

If the foreman yells and swears at all of the workers, he's treating everyone equally badly. It's not very professional, but it's not discrimination. It would be illegal if the foreman targeted only certain employees for negative language, such as calling some of them racial names.

- 7. Hannah is white. Her husband is from Saudi Arabia. Her boss says Hannah's husband should not come into the restaurant to pick her up because his customers feel uncomfortable around Arabs.**

Fair employment laws protect a person's "national origin" – being born in another country. Hannah's boss cannot tell her husband to stay away from the restaurant. The boss can't treat Hannah differently because her husband is from another country.

- 8. Lauren, who works as a grocery store clerk, is six months pregnant. She feels fine, and her doctor says she can keep on working. Her employer says she must go on leave until after the baby is born.**

If Lauren is well and able to work, her employer cannot force her to take time off just because she is pregnant.

- 9. Austin, who is gay, tells the manager that his coworkers make negative remarks about gay people. The comments continue.**

Sexual orientation is a "protected class" under fair employment laws. The manager must take steps to stop the negative remarks.

- 10. Jasmine's religion requires that she wear a scarf covering her hair at all times. Her boss tells her several times to "take that thing off." He also says that religious beliefs have no place at work.**

Jasmine's scarf has nothing to do with how well she does her work. The boss should let her practice her religion by letting her wear a head covering. Employers must let employees have religious expression, unless it makes it hard to do business.

- 11. Morgan has depression and she needs a long lunch once a week to meet with her therapist. Morgan still does all her work, but her boss says she can't take a long lunch, because he has to treat all employees the same.**

Morgan has a disability, so her employer must let her have reasonable time off to get treatment. Her boss should treat all employees similarly, but sometimes must change the rules for disabled employees. The boss can allow her to make up the time lost, take sick leave or adjust her pay.

- 12. After Andrew files a discrimination complaint against his company, his boss cuts his work hours.**

Retaliation is not allowed under fair employment laws. The boss can't cut Andrew's hours just because he filed a discrimination complaint. The boss can't take other negative actions against Andrew unless he fails to do his job.