



We're All In It Together

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Preventing Sexual Harassment in Workplaces

The Florida Commission on Human Relations invites businesses and organizations to help stop sexual harassment in the workplace

Tallahassee – In honor of the eighth annual National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the Florida Commission on Human Relations is challenging businesses and organizations throughout Florida to take an active role in preventing sexual harassment. The Commission is asking local businesses and organizations to sign a sexual harassment pledge. This pledge is a symbolic representation of a business or organization's commitment to fighting sexual harassment in the workplace.

"Sexual harassment is frequently viewed as a taboo and uncomfortable subject, meaning it often goes unmentioned," said Commission Chairperson, Donna Elam. "It is important for business owners to realize that without implementing and maintaining policies against harassment, they may face costly law suits, suffer from low employee morale and lose valuable customers. The Commission's new anti-harassment initiatives are designed to begin meaningful conversations that allow businesses, and their employees, to reach important decisions on maintaining safe and respectful workplaces."

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual behavior in the workplace that is sufficiently severe or frequent to the point that it results in a hostile or abusive work environment. Sexual harassment can be verbal or involve physical touch, and can apply to a current or former employee or a job applicant. During fiscal year 2007, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigated 12,510 allegations of sexual harassment; of those allegations, 16% were filed by males.

"We would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the businesses which have already signed the pledge," said Commission Executive Director, Derick Daniel. "Their commitment is critical in addressing the costly and unfortunate realities of sexual harassment. They are setting an important example for many others and we commend them!"

Businesses interested in learning more about the pledge or local anti-harassment initiatives can visit the Commission website at http://fchr.state.fl.us/outreach/sexual_harassment.

The Florida Commission on Human Relations, established in 1969, is the state agency charged with enforcing the Florida Civil Rights Act and Fair Housing Act. Fair treatment, equal access and mutual respect are the benchmarks of the Commission's commitment. Through education, outreach and partnerships, the Commission works to prevent discrimination through teaching best practices and fostering cultural understanding in communities statewide.

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