

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FORMER PUBLIC WORKS SUPERINTENDENT WINS DISCRIMINATION SUIT
AGAINST HARRISON TOWNSHIP**

PITTSBURGH, PA, FEBRUARY 21, 2008: The former Superintendent of Public Works for Harrison Township, PA, Robert J. Hines, today obtained a judgment against the Township on all claims in his Discrimination lawsuit in federal court, following an investigation by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission which concluded that Harrison Township violated the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The lawsuit was filed in May of 2007 in the U.S. District Court in Pittsburgh by Hines's attorneys Christian Bagin and Charles Lamberton.

"They finally had to give up because they knew I never did anything wrong except work too hard for the community," stated Mr. Hines. "I was trying to get back to work for months, and when I had jumped through all their hoops, they fired me anyway because they were afraid, and because they were mad that I knew my rights. This victory lifts a cloud that has been over me and my family in our home town for three years. People spread false

rumors about why I was fired. Now the truth is in black and white for everybody to see."

According to the complaint, Mr. Hines had been employed by the Township for over twenty-five years until he took an approved medical leave in November 2004 due to work-related depression and anxiety, and invoked his rights under the ADA and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act. Mr. Hines's complaint alleged that although he had been released to return to work on the afternoon of June 23, 2005, Township Commissioners voted to fire him at a meeting that night, in violation of state and federal anti-discrimination laws.

On February 11, 2008, the Township offered to allow Mr. Hines to take a judgment against the Township on all claims and allegations in Mr. Hines' counts of his complaint, and agreed to pay for his medical expenses and attorneys fees. "Getting the judgment was critical because it means that Mr. Hines' good name and reputation are restored," said Mr. Lamberton. "It's an act by the Court that formally recognizes that what the Township did was totally wrong."

"I hope this case impresses upon the Township and other employers that when workers suffer from disabling conditions--whether mental or physical--the law protects them when they want to try to return to work," responded Mr. Bagin, of Wienand and Bagin, a Downtown Pittsburgh firm that concentrates on employment law. "It is in everybody's best interest for

employers to work together with their employees who may need accommodations and time off, so that we don't waste the productive capacity of good workers like Jeff Hines based on myths, fears, and stereotypes. It should also serve as a warning to those who would try to bully workers from exercising their civil rights, that such conduct is called retaliation and it is illegal."

The Township had initially tried to have the lawsuit dismissed on technical and procedural grounds but Judge Gary Lancaster refused to dismiss the case.

More information:

Americans with Disabilities Act: www.eeoc.gov

Family and Medical Leave Act: <http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/>

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