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**NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ANNOUNCES GAINS IN COMBATTING
WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN TWO YEARS SINCE LAUNCH OF #METOO**

Commission has recovered over \$2.2 million in damages and penalties, a landmark \$155,000 sexual harassment civil penalty and nearly 350,000 completions of online sexual harassment prevention training

NEW YORK – In the two years since the #MeToo movement launched, the New York City Commission on Human Rights announces significant achievements in combatting workplace sexual harassment. A multi-faceted approach to the issue has led to record high damages and civil penalties, the launch of the Gender-Based Harassment Unit within the Commission’s Law Enforcement Bureau, comprehensive business outreach and engagement, and hundreds of thousands of completions of the Commission’s online sexual harassment prevention training since its launch earlier this year

“Workplace sexual harassment is a longstanding issue that I have sought to address with the full enforcement power afforded by the NYC Human Rights Law,” said **Carmelyn P. Malalis, Chair and Commissioner of the NYC Commission on Human Rights**. “In 2015, the Commission issued the highest civil penalty in the agency’s history in a case of egregious sexual harassment. The message was clear: sexual harassment will not be tolerated in NYC. In 2017, the bravery of the hundreds of thousands of people who came forward for the #MeToo movement created a momentum that is still creating change today. We will continue to use these cases to send the message that New York City will not be idle in prosecuting workplace sexual harassment.”

In the two years following the start of the #MeToo movement the Commission’s Law Enforcement Bureau has ordered over \$2.2 million in damages and penalties for violations of workplace sexual harassment protections. A recent settlement in a case against legal recruitment firm Wegman Partners included a \$155,000 civil penalty, the second-highest in a sexual harassment case in Commission history (the Commission levied its highest civil penalty to date in a 2015 sexual harassment case). As of the end of Fiscal Year 2019, the Commission was investigating 209 claims of gender-based harassment.

The Wegman Partners settlement, which in addition to civil penalties demands trainings, nationwide policy changes, and establishing an independent counsel or HR firm to deal with harassment complaints, is just one example of the firm stance the Commission takes on cases of sexual harassment.

Additional cases include:

- A recycling center paying \$110,000 in damages and civil penalties, mandating comprehensive training, and community service,
- A security firm paying \$181,000 in damages and civil penalties for sexual harassment and retaliation, and
- An art gallery paying \$95,000 in damages to an employee for sexual harassment.

The Commission also announces nearly 350,000 completions of its online, interactive sexual harassment prevention training since its launch in April 2019. The training, which is offered and has been completed in 11 languages, has been adopted internally by employers large and small, including the New York Public Library. While developed as a part of the 2018 Stop Sexual Harassment Act of NYC, the training has served as a model for other jurisdictions to replicate. The training is available for free online at www.nyc.gov/humanrights and is compliant with New York City and State requirements.

To educate employers and businesses about the required training, the Commission worked with Business Improvement Districts, business associations, and chambers of commerce to maximize outreach. The Commission also sent over 290,000 English and Spanish mailers to businesses across the City with information on how to access the training.

In January 2019, to better support the Commission's fight against sexual harassment, the Commission launched the Gender-Based Harassment Unit within the Law Enforcement Bureau. The Unit is made up of a team of lawyers and specialists dedicated to investigating and prosecuting cases of sexual harassment.

New York City is home to one of the strongest anti-discrimination laws in the nation and includes a broad standard for what constitutes unlawful workplace harassment. Treating someone less well because of their gender in a way that demeans, embarrasses, or threatens them, is sexual harassment. Additionally, victims of sexual harassment in New York City may file claims at the Commission even when they are bound by arbitration agreements that prevent them from filing cases in court. An award-winning citywide integrated multimedia and multiplatform campaign called "It's Sexual Harassment" ran in 2018 to increase public awareness of the Commission as a venue for justice. In early 2019, the Commission provided testimony before two joint hearings of the New York State Assembly and Senate on the broad protections under the NYC Human Rights Law and offered recommendations as to how the State may increase protections for victims of workplace sexual harassment.

If you believe you are the victim of sexual harassment or any other type of discrimination under the NYC Human Rights Law, call the Commission by dialing 311 and asking for Human Rights. Reports may also be filed anonymously and reported on the [Commission's website](#).

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