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**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
COMMISSION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION  
ONE ASHBURTON PLACE, BOSTON, MA 02108-1518**



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Sunila Thomas-George  
Commissioner

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Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JOINT MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL  
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN  
SETTLEMENT OF NEW BEDFORD IMMIGRANT DISCRIMINATION CASE.**

**IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY GROUP APPLAUDS SETTLEMENT;  
MONEY WILL HELP IN EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced today that they have negotiated a settlement with Michael Bianco, Inc. (MBI) of New Bedford, MA.

Nine former employees alleged that they had been discriminated against on the basis of their national origin. As part of the settlement entered into by the MCAD, EEOC, and Michael Bianco, Inc., MBI agreed to pay each individual employee three thousand dollars and to make a donation of fifteen thousand dollars to the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA Coalition), an immigrant advocacy organization.

The former employees of Michael Bianco, Inc. were primarily of Central and South American descent. They alleged that MBI paid them less than employees of other national origins. In addition, they claimed that Michael Bianco, Inc. unfairly and discriminatorily reprimanded them for workplace conduct. Finally, they contended that Michael Bianco, Inc. wrongfully fined them for workplace infractions, using toilet paper in the bathroom, and spending more than 2-3 minutes in the bathroom during work hours.

The MCAD investigators heading this case were Abby Soto-Colon, Victor Posada, and Francisco Villalobos, working with Commission counsel William Green and Simone Liebman, and EEOC attorney Ken An.

Malcolm Medley, MCAD Chairman, commented, "This shows the wonderful cooperation between MCAD and our federal partners. The MCAD and EEOC are pleased to have facilitated a settlement that includes a charitable donation to the MIRA Coalition, whose mission is to protect and promote the rights of immigrants and refugees in the Commonwealth. It is important to send a message to companies that it is unacceptable to, on the one hand, take advantage of vulnerable employees by engaging in unfair and discriminatory practices, while on the other hand, create an uneven playing field for law-abiding businesses that respect our equal pay and anti-discrimination laws." Eva Millona, MIRA Executive Director added, "MIRA Coalition is very pleased with this settlement, which brought some relief to the families involved without a protracted battle in court, while still imposing serious consequences for the company. However, this case highlights the ongoing need for comprehensive immigration reform as the only solution to avoid cases like this in the future."

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination is the state's chief civil rights agency. The Commission works to eliminate discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, lending, and public accommodation, and strives to advance the civil rights of the citizens of the Commonwealth through law enforcement, outreach, and training. MCAD currently maintains offices in Boston, Worcester, and Springfield.

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