

Terminated

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Synopsis

Kathy Johnston had worked for the school district as a teacher for English language learners for over 12 years and in each of those years she had been granted leave from her job to attend several religious functions that were important to her and her religious convictions. However, in the most current year, Kathy had requested leave for these religious functions and her request had been denied. She left anyway and attended the functions. When she returned to work, she was put on administrative leave. Kathy requested and was granted a special hearing before the Board of Education. After much testimony, the Board's decision was to cancel her contract. Besides being unemployed, this move had additional consequences for Kathy.

Learning Outcomes

After reading and studying this case, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify the criteria that qualify as "religion" under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the practices the law protects.
- 2) Explain what Kathy would need to show in order to establish her religious discrimination claim.
- 3) Assess how an employer/manager should handle a situation in which an employee requests time-off from work for religious reasons or if there is a religious-based conflict between the employee and employer.
- 4) Examine the defenses that are available to Kathy's employer.
- 5) Discuss "reasonable accommodation" and "undue hardship" as they relate to religious discrimination cases in the workplace.

Application

This case is best used in an undergraduate business law course. Due to the advanced nature of the material, it could be used in a human resource law or business ethics class. It is also appropriate for graduate courses in human resources, employment law, or ethics.

Key Words

Termination; religious freedom; religious discrimination;

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