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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Moody Calls for Investigation into Starbucks Race-Based Quota Hiring Program



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is calling on the Florida Commission on Human Relations to investigate Starbucks Coffee Company for hiring practices that appear to discriminate on the basis of race. Attorney General Moody says Starbucks's hiring practices go beyond simply aspirational goals and instead constitute unlawful quotas.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The bottom line is hiring practices using race-based quotas are illegal. Starbucks has published publicly available policies that raise sufficient concerns that they are using a quota system, and that compensation is tied to that system. The Florida Commission on Human Relations has a duty to investigate these concerns to ensure that Florida civil rights laws are not violated."

The complaint filed with the FCHR cites a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College in which the court ruled racial discrimination "demeans the dignity and worth of a person to be judged by ancestry instead of by his or her own merit and essential qualities." The complaint goes on to state that Students for Fair Admissions addressed government policies, but SCOTUS also addressed claims under federal civil rights laws, which according to the complaint apply in many cases to private

employers. FCHR is charged with enforcing Florida's civil rights laws, which are "modeled after and interpreted consistent with federal civil rights laws."

According to publicly available policies, Starbucks pledges to achieve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color represented in at least 30% of all corporate levels and 40% of all retail and manufacturing roles by 2025. According to further publicly available policies, Starbucks executives have compensation tied to inclusion and diversity objectives.

The complaint states, "The Starbucks policies described above appear on their face to be racial quotas. They set specific race-based employment targets. And to the extent Starbucks suggests that these are merely aspirational 'goals,' and not quotas, that claim would be hard to square with Starbucks's decision to tie executive compensation to meeting those targets."

Attorney General Moody says, at a minimum, Starbucks's publicly available policies raise sufficient concerns that merit the FCHR investigate to ensure Florida law is being followed.

Read the full complaint here.

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