Department of Justice

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST THE CITY OF DAYTON, OHIO ALLEGING RACE DISCRIMINATION IN THE HIRING OF FIREFIGHTERS AND POLICE OFFICERS

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice filed a complaint today alleging that the City of Dayton, Ohio, violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by engaging in a pattern or practice of employment discrimination against African-Americans in its hiring of entry-level firefighters and police officers.

The complaint alleges that the City's use of its heightened qualifications for firefighters since 2004 and its use of a written police officer examination have resulted in employment discrimination against African-Americans.

According to the complaint, although the civilian labor force of the City of Dayton is approximately 37 percent African-American, only 2.4 percent of its sworn firefighters and only 9.1 percent of the City's sworn police officers are African-American. In addition, the percentage of African-Americans in the City's fire department has actually decreased over the years from seven percent in 1984, to 4.3 percent in 2001, to 2.4 percent in 2008.

As stated in the complaint, the Justice Department is seeking a court order enjoining the City from continuing to discriminate against African-Americans on the basis of race in violation of Title VII and, specifically, from continuing to use the heightened firefighter requirements and challenged written police officer examination. The Justice Department also is asking the court to order the City to provide relief to individual African-Americans who have been or will be harmed as a result of the city's heightened firefighter qualifications and use of the written police officer examination.

This is the eighth Title VII suit the Division has filed so far this year. Additional information about Title VII and other federal employment laws is available on the Department of Justice Web site at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/emp/index.html.

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