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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DECOSTAR INDUSTRIES SUED BY EEOC**

**FOR RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION**

***Carrollton Auto Parts Manufacturer Fired Employee Over Sabbath Request,***

***Federal Agency Charged***

ATLANTA – Decostar Industries, Inc., a manufacturer and supplier of automotive parts based in Carrollton, Ga., violated federal law by discriminating against an employee because of her religion, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) charged in a lawsuit it filed today.

According to the EEOC’s suit, Decostar violated federal law by firing Dina Lucas Velasquez rather than accommodating her religious beliefs. Sometime in 2010, Decostar required all employees to work mandatory overtime hours on designated Saturdays. Line worker Velasquez requested that she be excused from working Saturdays due to her religious belief that she cannot work during her weekly Sabbath, which she observes from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday. The EEOC said that Decostar initially granted Velasquez’s request until January 2014, when a new super­visor took over her department and denied her ongoing request for a religious accommodation. Decostar subsequently discharged Velasquez on Oct. 27, 2014.

Such alleged conduct violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC filed suit (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Decostar Industries, Inc., Civil Action No. 3:17-cv-00054-TCB-RGV) in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settle­ment through its conciliation process. The federal agency seeks back pay, compensatory damages and punitive damages for Velasquez, as well as injunctive relief designed to prevent such discrimination in the future.

“The EEOC remains vigilant in enforcing the mandates of federal law requiring employers to properly consider all requests and to grant accommodations to sincerely held religious beliefs,” said Antonette Sewell, regional attorney for the EEOC's Atlanta District Office.

Bernice Williams-Kimbrough, district director for EEOC’s Atlanta District Office, added, “Unfortunately, employers refusing time off for religious observances has become an increasingly common issue affecting the workforce. We hope that suits like this will help educate employers on their responsibilities to respect workers’ religious needs.”

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new).

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