



**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**  
***Hawaii Civil Rights Commission***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STATE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION ISSUES DECISION  
IN RELIGIOUS HARASSMENT CASE**  
***Employer Held Liable for Religious and Sexual Harassment***

HONOLULU — The Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) issued a final decision and order holding the Research Institute for Hawaii USA (RIH), and its CEO Christopher Damon Haig, liable for religious and sexual harassment and discrimination against their former executive director Kay Lorraine Bate. HCRC Executive Director William Hoshijo and complainant Bate's legal team applauded the Commission decision of August 26, 2014.

The five-member Commission stated in its 66 page decision, "...the weight of the evidence shows that Haig's harassment of Complainant was based on a combination of two protected factors – because Complainant was Jewish and a woman." The Commission also found that Bate was terminated because of her religion and for complaining about the harassment.

The Commission ordered RIH and Haig to pay Bate \$343,200 in back pay, \$200,000 in compensatory damages for injury to her feelings, emotions, and mental well-being, and \$300,000 in punitive damages. The Commission also ordered the employer to implement a non-discrimination policy and to cease and desist from discriminating against all employees on the basis of religion or sex. The decision held Haig individually liable because RIH was his "alter ego" and use of RIH's corporate status as a shield against individual liability would "bring about injustice and inequity."

HCRC Executive Director William Hoshijo brought the case for hearing before the Commission after an investigation of Bate's employment discrimination complaint. Attorneys Margery Bronster and Susan Ichinose represented Kay Lorraine Bate while attorney Bruce Voss represented RIH and Christopher Damon Haig.

“This final decision is significant for two reasons,” said HCRC Executive Director Hoshijo, “strong state civil rights protections against religious and sexual harassment as well as affirming that there is no place for anti-Semitism or other religious discrimination in Hawaii.”

“The Commission’s final decision vindicates Kay Lorraine Bate’s right, and the right of all workers, to be free from discrimination in the workplace,” said her attorney Margery Bronster, “offering a remedy for the harm inflicted on her and delivering a message that should deter others from this kind of conduct.”

Federal and State anti-discrimination agencies have for years outlawed hostile environment harassment in employment on the basis of sex, race, age, and other categories protected by statute, including religion. “This case is important because it specifically confirms that policy,” said Bate attorney Susan Ichinose. “An employer cannot harass an employee on the basis of her religion—this is the first case decision in Hawaii holding religious harassment to be illegal under that policy.”

The Commission’s final decision is appealable to the state circuit court within 30 days of its issuance.

A copy of the Commission’s final decision can be obtained on the HCRC website at <http://labor.hawaii.gov/hcrc>, or by calling the HCRC Adjudication Section at 586-8659.

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