**National Origin Discrimination Law**

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of national origin. The EEOC defines national origin discrimination as denial of equal employment opportunity because of a person's, or his or her ancestor's, place of origin; or because a person has the physical, cultural, or cultural, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group. National origin further encompasses accent, affiliation, alienage (alien status), ancestry and appearance.

Accents have been used by employers as a proxy for national origin discrimination. A person's accent can be considered a sign that the person is not a native of America. Consequently, adverse employment decisions involving a person's accent are closely scrutinized by the courts.

Affiliations involve discrimination on the basis of a person's marriage to a member of a national origin group or participation in schools, churches, temples or mosques used by people of a national origin group. Employers are required to make employment decisions on the basis of the employee's qualifications and performance and not on the basis of the employee's affiliations.

While the EEOC does not consider employment decisions based upon citizenship to violate Title VII unless it has the purpose or effect of discriminating against a national origin group, other federal statutes prohibit employers from discrimination on the basis of alienage.

Appearance when related to a person's national origin cannot be used by an employer as the basis for an employment action. The law also protects employees who appear (from the perception of the employer) to be a member of a national origin group even where the employee is not actually a member of the national origin group.

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