

Publications & News

In the News

Debbie Petito Quoted in Law360 on EEOC Religious Bias Decision

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Offit Kurman Principal [Debbie Petito](#) was recently quoted in the Law360 article, "3 Takeaways as EEOC Sheds Light on Groff's Application," discussing a recent EEOC decision on religious bias.

In a March 7 opinion, the EEOC concluded that the Natural Resources Conservation Service did not discriminate against an employee who was denied an exemption from a required civil rights training that he believed violated his religious beliefs. The ruling provides valuable insight for private employers about how the commission will apply the Groff test.

Petito told Law360, the issue of religious accommodations doesn't arise often for many employers, and it's important for them to understand exactly what the concern is when an employee raises it. She stressed the importance of asking any questions not in an accusatory or negative manner, but in a sincere way to understand the employee's accommodation request so it can be properly evaluated.

"The main thing is to find out what the employee wants and why," Petito said. "Because if you don't understand the ask, you can't have the discussion, I don't think."

"With training, I would be asking them, 'So why do you believe that the training interferes with their beliefs?'" she added. "The 'why' is really important to have, and it's part of that interactive process."

Read the full Law360 article [here](#) (subscription required).

Related People

- Deborah H. Petito