

Key Legal Cases - Employment Discrimination

Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins (1989)

Ann Hopkins denied partnership despite strong performance. Partners described her as "macho" and suggested she "walk more femininely." Supreme Court ruled gender stereotyping violates Title VII even without explicit sex-based policies.

Implications: Personality-based assessments using gendered language constitute discrimination.

EEOC v. Sterling Jewelers (2008-2022)

Systemic gender discrimination in performance evaluations and promotions. Women consistently rated lower on subjective "leadership" criteria despite objective performance metrics.

Implications: Subjective evaluation criteria require objective behavioral support.

Disparate Impact Standard

Griggs v. Duke Power (1971) established that employment practices with discriminatory effects violate Title VII even without discriminatory intent.

Application to reviews: Language patterns that systematically disadvantage protected groups create legal liability regardless of evaluator intent.