



Department of Fair Employment & Housing

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Nicola's Nightclub Agrees to Pay \$260,000 to Resolve Allegations Nightclub Managers Sexually Assaulted Dancers

Dancers Say They Were Raped, Forced to Perform Sex Acts in Exchange for Ability to Perform, Harassed and Assaulted By Club Management, Patrons

Sacramento - The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), California's civil rights agency, announced today the settlement of a lawsuit under the Fair Employment and Housing Act against Nicola's Nightclub, Inc., doing business as Nicola's Gentleman's Club, a nightclub in the city of Commerce, Michael Khorsandi, the owner of Nicola's, and Wadhah "Dino" Saalih, a manager who was alleged to have coerced dancers he supervised into sex acts. DFEH brought suit to vindicate the rights of four dancers, who later intervened in the lawsuit and asserted additional wage and hour claims under the Labor Code.

"Employees in every single workplace in California, including nightclubs, have the right to earn a living without fearing sexual assault or harassment from their supervisors, co-workers, or customers," said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. "DFEH is committed to ensuring workplaces in every industry keep this basic promise."

DFEH's complaint alleged that dancers at Nicola's were subjected to sexual assault, sexual harassment, and racial discrimination and harassment. In the global settlement between DFEH, Nicola's Nightclub, Khorsandi, and Saalih, and the plaintiffs in intervention, the defendants agreed to pay the dancers \$260,000 and to affirmative relief to prevent future violations of the law. These measures include development of a new policy to prevent sexual harassment, anti-harassment training for supervisors and employees, disseminating notice of the settlement to all employees, and DFEH monitoring of the nightclub's compliance for three years.

The litigation is captioned *DFEH v. Nicola's Nightclub, Inc., et al.*, case number 20STCV43129 (Los Angeles County Superior Court).

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The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit the DFEH's web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.

