U.S. Department of Justice Drops Immigration Case Against SpaceX

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has announced the dismissal of its case against SpaceX, the aerospace company led by Elon Musk, which was accused of discriminatory hiring practices against certain immigrants. This decision, filed in a Brownsville, Texas court, concludes the case with prejudice, preventing future similar claims.

In August 2023, during President Joe Biden's administration, the DOJ filed an administrative complaint against SpaceX. The complaint alleged that from 2018 to 2022, the company discouraged asylum recipients and refugees from applying for jobs and refused to consider their applications.

According to the DOJ, SpaceX's job postings and public statements showed a hiring preference for U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. The company cited U.S. export control laws as the reason for this restriction. However, the DOJ argued that these laws did not require hiring limitations. However, the DOJ contended that these laws did not mandate such hiring limitations.

SpaceX has consistently denied any wrongdoing. In a November 16, 2023 court filing, SpaceX stated that export control laws impose "strict limitations on whom it can employ." The company emphasized following "strict policies and procedures" to comply with these regulations. It also asserted that these measures help prevent unlawful discrimination.

In response to the administrative complaint, SpaceX initiated legal action to block the proceedings, challenging the legitimacy of the DOJ's administrative judges. The company argued that these judges were improperly appointed by the U.S.

Attorney General and wielded powers that should be reserved for officials appointed by the President. A federal judge had temporarily halted the DOJ's case to consider these arguments. Subsequently, in January 2025, the DOJ indicated a potential reevaluation of the case, leading to the recent decision to dismiss it entirely.

This development occurs amidst broader discussions regarding the authority of federal agencies and their internal enforcement mechanisms. Both Elon Musk and President Donald Trump have expressed criticism of federal agencies' powers, including those related to immigration enforcement. Notably, Musk serves as a top adviser to President Trump. It leads a commission focused on identifying and eliminating inefficiencies within the federal government.

The dismissal of this case marks an important moment in the ongoing debate on corporate hiring practices. It also highlights discussions on federal regulatory authority and interpreting export control laws in employment.

U.S. Appeals Court Upholds Block on Trump's Birthright Citizenship Order

A U.S. appeals court has blocked President Donald Trump's executive order restricting automatic birthright citizenship. The San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied the administration's emergency request to lift a nationwide injunction issued by a federal judge in Seattle. This executive order, signed on January 20, directed U.S. agencies to deny citizenship to children born in the United

States if neither parent is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident.

The 9th Circuit's decision marks the first appellate review of this policy, which is anticipated to be ultimately resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court. Similar blocks have been instituted by judges in Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, with appeals in progress.

The Justice Department argued that the Seattle-based U.S. District Judge John Coughenour's ruling was overly broad, as it imposed a nationwide injunction at the request of four Democratic-led states. However, the three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit declined to stay the injunction and scheduled arguments for June.

U.S. Circuit Judge Danielle Forrest, appointed by Trump during his first term, concurred with the decision. He emphasized that a hasty ruling could undermine public confidence in the judiciary's impartiality. She noted that the government's proposed exception to birthright citizenship lacks judicial precedent.

The White House and the Justice Department have not provided immediate comments on the ruling.

Opponents of the executive order, including Democratic state attorneys general and immigrant rights advocates, contend that it violates the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. They reference the 1898 Supreme Court case, United States v. Wong Kim Ark, which affirmed birthright citizenship irrespective of parental immigration status.

Judge Coughenour, appointed by former President Ronald Reagan, initially blocked the order on January 23. He described it as "blatantly unconstitutional." He later extended this block into a preliminary injunction. During a hearing on February 6, Coughenour criticized the administration's attempt to revoke citizenship rights via an executive order. He equated this to

a constitutional amendment.

If implemented, the executive order would deny citizenship to over 150,000 children born annually in the United States, as estimated by the state attorneys general.

Investigating The SCOTUS Leak: Here's What Needs to be Done

Administrative LawH&M will pay $36 million to settle accusations that the fashion retailer illegally kept millions of dollars in gift cards that customers never used, New York Attorney General Letitia…

Newly proposed SC law would make it a crime to ask about vaccine status

Administrative LawA newly proposed law in the South Carolina Statehouse would make it a criminal offense for your employer – or anyone – to ask about your vaccination status. Under the new proposed law

Judge Accused of Failing to Follow COVID-19 Recommendations is Removed From 2 Trials

NewsAn Ohio judge has been removed from two upcoming criminal trials after a lawyer for the defendants alleged that the judge was failing to implement COVID-19 precautions.

Invitation: SCCE's 19th Annual Compliance & Ethics Institute

Event, Sept. 14-16, 2020

The first ever virtual CEI will have the great speakers and content you've come to expect at the in-person event with 100+ education sessions over 3 days.

Former Crestline Police Chief Joe Butler Awarded $380,000 Settlement

News

Former Crestline police chief Joe Butler has been awarded a $380,000 settlement in a lawsuit he filed against the village.

Jennifer Dulos’ Family Sues CT Judge Over Court Delays Due to COVID

News

A lawyer representing Jennifer Dulos’ family has filed a federal complaint seeking to require the state Judicial Branch to foreclose on Fotis Dulos’ former Farmington residence even though housing proceedings have been halted due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Ninth Circuit Holds Proof of Injury Not Required for

Unclean Hands

News

Unclean hands remains a viable defense today in the context of equitable claims.

Marketing Your Practice: The Ins and Outs of Legal Client Relationship Management Tools

News

With online advertising leading the way, there is an increased need to track and manage legal marketing efforts.

RumbergerKirk Secures TCPA Fax Victory Before FCC

News

The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has ruled faxes sent to "online fax services" are not faxes to "telephone fax machines."

Download: Comprehensive Guide to the CCPA

Insight

The California Consumer Privacy Act went into effect on January 1, and companies must ready themselves for Data Subject Access Requests from consumers.

NYC Bar Urges Congressional Inquiry Into AG Barr's Conduct

News

The letter to the leaders highlighted four public statements the AG made that the association found troubling.

American Axle: Does Patent Subject Matter Eligibility

Depend on Enablement?

Webinar, Jan. 30, 2020

Fitch, Even, Tabin & Flannery LLP will present a free webinar, “American Axle: Does Patent Subject Matter Eligibility Depend on Enablement?,” featuring Fitch Even attorneys Stanley A. Schlitter and Andrew C. Wood.

Justice Department Says Virginia Action Would Come Too Late to Ratify ERA

News

The ERA Coalition said it “strongly disagrees” with the DOJ’s memo.

The Biggest Supreme Court Cases to Watch in 2020

News

The Supreme Court will hear a slate of highly charged disputes when the justices return to the bench in the new year and resume one of the most politically volatile terms in recent memory.

Biglaw Firm Sued by Crypto Fund Manager for Alleged Malpractice

News

Digital Capital Management's complaint alleges that the law firm provided "inaccurate analysis and advice."

Financial Tug-Of-War Emerges Over California Fire Victims' Settlement

News

The settlement leaves open just how much would be used to compensate victims, their lawyers and federal and state agencies for the money they spent on rescue and recovery operations.

Biglaw Partner Who Said She

Worked 3,173 Billable Hours is Suspended for Overbilling

News

Doreen Zankowski conceded to a hearing committee that “her billing practices were inadequate, careless, rushed and error-prone.”

University of Phoenix Reaches Landmark Agreement to Forgive Student Loans

News

The university will pay $191 million, of which $141 million will be used to forgive some student loans for certain borrowers who attended the university.