

The EEOC issued the following press release on June 5, 2006:

**CLASS OF WOMEN TO RECEIVE \$48.9 MILLION IN EEOC-VERIZON
PREGNANCY BIAS SETTLEMENT**

More Than 12,300 Women Nationwide to Receive Monetary Relief in Landmark Case
NEW YORK, N.Y. – The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced that, pursuant to a court-filed consent decree, telecommunications giant Verizon Communications, Inc. will pay approximately \$48.9 million to 12,326 current and former female employees in 13 states and the District of Columbia as part of a 2002 settlement of a landmark class action lawsuit alleging pregnancy discrimination against Verizon predecessor telephone companies NYNEX and Bell Atlantic.

EEOC and New York-based Verizon jointly submitted a final report today to U.S. District Court Judge Denny Chin informing him that the claims process was completed in December 2004 and the total compensation paid to date under the settlement is more than \$25.3 million. EEOC submitted a separate letter informing the court that it projected that an additional \$23.6 million would be paid in future pension benefits. The size of the class and estimated value of monetary benefits make this the largest EEOC settlement of its kind involving pregnancy-related service credit adjustments. EEOC litigated the cases along with two unions representing the non-managerial employees, the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The consent decree resolved employment discrimination lawsuits filed by the EEOC's New York District Office in 1997 and 1999 against Bell Atlantic and NYNEX (now Verizon), and their predecessor companies and related subsidiaries. The suits alleged that the companies violated Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, and the Civil Rights Act of 1991, by denying female employees service credit related to pregnancy and maternity leaves of absence taken between July 2, 1965 and April 28, 1979, and care for newborn children leaves of absence taken between July 2, 1965 and December 31, 1983.

“As retirement benefits become increasingly important to today’s workers, it is critical to fight back when discrimination occurs,” said EEOC’s New York District Director Spencer H. Lewis, Jr. “Employers should be aware that pregnancy discrimination in regard to benefits is just not acceptable – to workers and to the EEOC.”

CWA Vice President Christopher M. Shelton noted, "CWA has been involved for many years in efforts to eliminate pregnancy discrimination in the workplace. This case represents an important victory for working women who should not have had to sacrifice their pension benefits because they had children." CWA represents nearly 70,000 clerical, sales, service and technical workers at Verizon, many of whom are located in the states covered by the lawsuit.

The consent decree covers all women employed at any time since January 8, 1994, by any former Bell Atlantic or NYNEX (now Verizon) company located in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania,

Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and/or West Virginia, and who took a pregnancy or maternity-related leave of absence between July 2, 1965 and April 28, 1979, and/or a leave of absence for the care of a newborn child (CNC) between July 2, 1965 and December 31, 1983.

EEOC Regional Attorney Elizabeth Grossman, who oversaw the litigation effort, said, “We are pleased that so many women were able to come forward and participate in this settlement. Many of them will be seeing its results in their pension checks each month for years to come.”

Under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, which amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, employment discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions constitutes unlawful sex discrimination. In addition to prohibiting sex-based discrimination, Title VII prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin.

The EEOC is responsible for enforcing the federal laws prohibiting discrimination in employment based on race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), religion, national origin, age, disability, and retaliation. Further information about the Commission is available on its web site at