

Dancer Claims Age Discrimination

An exotic dancer has filed a discrimination complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. Kim Ouwroulis, 44, complained that the strip club she worked at fired her due to her age. She had worked there 4 years before being fired. Ms. Ouwroulis was told by the owner of the strip club that “they were going in a new direction with younger girls.”^[1] She has since found work at a rival establishment.

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, age discrimination is prohibited. Section 5(1) states that:

Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability.^[2]

The complainant has an uphill battle in winning her case. The owner will likely argue Ms. Ouwroulis was fired due to her physical appearance, not simply age. Physical appearance is not a protected ground of discrimination under the Code. If Ms. Ouwroulis succeeds with her complaint, she may be entitled to receive monetary “compensation for injury to dignity, feelings and self-respect.”^[3]

^[1]CBC News, “Exotic Dancer files age discrimination complaint” CBC (3 November 2008).

^[2] *Human Rights Code*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19.

^[3] *Ibid.*, at s. 46.1(1).