



Mystic Pizza Employees Receive \$105,000 in Back Pay; Owner Failed to Pay Overtime, Minimum Wage

WETHERSFIELD, September 25, 2014 – A total of 110 Mystic Pizza employees will collectively receive more than \$105,000 in owed wages after an investigation by the Labor Department’s Wage and Workplace Standards Division determined they were paid less than the minimum wage or did not receive required overtime pay, State Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer announced today.

Investigators responding to three individual complaints determined that Mystic Pizza owner John Zelepos paid employees working as cooks, dishwashers and hosts as little as \$5.69 an hour – much less than the required minimum wage of \$8.70 an hour – and others received \$7.40 an hour.

The investigation, which reviewed the work period from May 2012 to June 2014, also found that employees worked up to 93 hours a week and were not paid the required overtime. In most cases, Zelepos paid the workers in cash for the additional hours worked and was not recording the correct amount of overtime. Mystic Pizza, located at 56 West Main Street in Mystic, is not affiliated with Mystic Pizza II in North Stonington.

“While there are many employers in our state paying their employees the proper wages, unfortunately, we find situations similar to this far too often,” noted Wage and Workplace Standards Director Gary K. Pechie. He added that the agency is now investigating a related complaint of alleged retaliation when one of the workers was fired after contacting the Labor Department about the wage violations.

According to Pechie, Zelepos is providing the Labor Department with individual payroll checks for the 110 employees, which range from approximately \$30 to more than \$15,000. In total, the amount owed to the employees is \$105,165.94. Zelepos must also pay an additional \$23,400 in civil penalties for 155 violations of state statute Section 31-60 (minimum wage) and Section 31-76c (overtime).

“Every employee deserves to be paid the required amount for the work that they do, and this is a flagrant example of an employer taking advantage of their workforce,” Pechie said. “We encourage any individual who believes they have not been paid properly for hours worked to file a complaint with the Labor Department.” He noted that a complaint form can be downloaded from the agency’s website at www.ct.gov/dol or one can be mailed by calling 860-263-6790. Employers with questions regarding compliance with Connecticut wage laws are also encouraged to contact the agency and speak with wage staff for guidance.

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