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FIRED FOR SERVING AMERICA: MARINE FILES LAWSUIT

MILFORD, CT., May 3, 2012 – A Milford car dealership fired an eighteen-year-old technician because he joined the Marine Reserves, a lawsuit filed today charges.

Derek Laaser, a Milford resident, was a mechanic at Chevrolet of Milford when he was fired because of his upcoming Marine service.

“Federal law clearly prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of military service,” said Atty. David Slossberg of the Milford-based law firm Hurwitz, Slossberg, Sagarin and Knuff.

Slossberg, who is representing Laaser, said, “Federal law is unequivocal in that an employer must not deny any benefit of employment on the basis of an individual’s military service.”

The suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Bridgeport.

Laaser was accepted into the Marine Reserves in December, 2011 and is scheduled to begin his military service with basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, on Monday. He had expected to return to his job at Chevrolet of Milford after completing his training. He recently received a promotion and pay increase at the car dealership, signifying that his superiors were pleased with his work.

While working at Chevrolet of Milford, Laaser also was participating in a General Motors Automotive Service Educational Program through Gateway Community College as part of requirements to complete an Associate’s Degree in Automotive Technology. By losing his job, he becomes ineligible to complete that program.

Chevrolet of Milford “decided to discharge a hard-working, skillful and qualified employee who had served the company well and desired to do so in the future on a continuing basis,” the lawsuit reads. Because the auto dealer willfully violated both federal and state law, Laaser is entitled to reinstatement, back pay, and a variety of other damages, the lawsuit states.

Chevrolet of Milford is located at 655 Bridgeport Avenue, Milford, CT.

“It is unfortunate that a local business would treat a young man this way who has chosen to serve his country,” Slossberg said.

Since 1967, Hurwitz, Sagarin, Slossberg and Knuff, LLC, based in Milford, Conn., has assisted clients in resolving complex legal issues related to commercial, civil rights and class action litigation in both state and federal court forums, and land use and zoning matters. The firm also provides legal counsel on matters concerning unfair trade practices, fraud, white-collar crime, construction issues, and employment law.

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