

November 20, 2020

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL PROTECTS ACCESS TO DATA USED TO COMBAT WORKPLACE
DISCRIMINATION**

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today joined a multistate coalition in lawsuit challenging the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) decision to revoke full access to federal employment data used by state and local fair employment practice agencies (FEPAs) to monitor and combat discrimination in the workplace. FEPAs rely on employment data to identify priorities for investigation and enforcement of civil rights laws protecting workers, which include addressing persistent gender and racial wage gaps in Illinois and across the country.

“This EEOC data is vital for states to monitor and combat discrimination and inequality in the workplace,” Raoul said. “I am committed to ensuring that all Illinois employees are respected and have workplaces free of discrimination.”

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), the EEOC is required to provide FEPAs — upon request and without cost — employment data obtained from any employer within the FEPA’s jurisdiction, to support efforts to effectively fight employment discrimination. Recently, in violation of Title VII, the EEOC abandoned its long-established practice of sharing all “Employer Information Report EEO-1” (EEO-1) data within a FEPA’s jurisdiction and now refuses to provide information until a specific employer is already under investigation. EEO-1 contains statistical data regarding the composition of an employer’s workforce by sex, race, and ethnicity. Full access to jurisdiction-wide data allows FEPAs to identify trends and enforcement priorities to protect the civil rights of all Illinois residents more effectively.

In making the change, the EEOC failed to engage in the formal rulemaking process — as required by the Administrative Procedure Act — and, among other things, misleadingly described the new rule as “current” practice in March of 2020. This latest arbitrary action is part of a broader pattern by the EEOC to limit access to critical employment data, including efforts to block the collection of summary earnings data for employees by sex, race, ethnicity and job category.

Joining Raoul in filing the complaint are the attorneys general of California, Nevada, New Jersey, Maryland, and Minnesota, as well as the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Illinois Department of Human Rights, and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.