

Harassment reports up 24 percent in 2007

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said the number of reported cases of racial harassment increased 24 percent in 2007. The EEOC said the number of reports in the workplace rose from 5,646 in 2006 to 6,977 in 2007, which is more than twice the number reported in 1991, USA Today reported Wednesday. EEOC chairwoman Naomi Earp said the increase in cases of racial harassment using nooses is indicative of wider racial tensions. The issue came to the forefront, the newspaper said, when officials charged six black students with attempted murder following an incident in which white students hung a noose in a school courtyard in Jena, La. Legislators in several states, such as New York, introduced bills to make threatening or intimidating people with a noose a crime. New Orleans introduced an anti-noose bill in November and the District of Columbia, followed suit Tuesday. The proposals raised concerns from rights groups pointing to issues over freedom of speech and expression. David Hudson with the First Amendment Center said the proposals need to protect both civil liberties and the individual's sense of safety and the ACLU of Maryland said it was working with state legislators to amend the proposals to that effect.

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