



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Cara Operations alters "sexy dress code" after allegations it was discriminatory

TORONTO, 3 November 2015 – An employment law expert at Toronto law firm Robins Appleby LLP has commended Cara Operations Ltd. on its response to employee allegations that its new dress code policy constituted discrimination and harassment based on sex. The recent about-face by Cara has been heralded by the lawyer as a resounding victory for women in Canada's service sector. Cara is one of Canada's largest owners of chain restaurants, including Harvey's, Swiss Chalet and Montana's.

Lawyer, Barbara Green was recently retained by Tierney Angus, a server at Cara's Bier Markt Queensway concerned with a newly implemented female dress code policy at the Belgian-themed brasserie which she felt was inappropriate and demeaning to female servers. The new dress code included a dress manufactured by Vancouver-based Dirty Girls Uniforms that she found tight, short and thin, exposing all curves, underwear lines and, in some cases, servers' underwear altogether. Since raising her voice in opposition to the dress code, Angus claims she has faced a reduction in work hours and threats of suspension. In response to Angus' concerns and Green's intervention, Cara recently implemented a revised dress code permitting female servers to don the outfit mandated for their male counterparts: a relaxed, button-down shirt, jeans and running shoes.

Barbara Green, partner at Robins Appleby LLP, issued the following statement:

"I commend my client for being brave enough to take on this battle, and Cara for taking appropriate steps to promptly respond to, and remedy, my client's claim that the dress code constituted discrimination based on sex. Women's bodies should not be used to sell burgers and beer. Employers need to recognize that they must comply with the standards set by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, which has cautioned employers against subjecting female employees to different requirements than male employees and expecting them to dress provocatively to attract clients. I hope that Cara's positive response will elicit the same reaction in other employers in the restaurant industry throughout Ontario."

Tierney Angus stated the following:

"I am relieved that Cara has offered alternatives to the revealing, skin-tight dress that leaves nothing to the imagination, especially in an industry where sexual harassment is rampant. I was told that the sexy dress code was not designed to sexualize or discriminate against women, but I certainly felt degraded when baring my body to perform my duties. Women should not be forced to wear skimpy uniforms at work. It should be their choice whether or not to wear revealing attire."

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For more information, please contact Teresa Paonessa, Marketing, at 416.868.1080 x 552

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