



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on October 9, 2013

EEOC Sues Firm: Didn't Accommodate Worker's Fear of "Mark of the Beast"

The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has filed a lawsuit against a Pennsylvania mining company on behalf of a man who said he was fired for refusing a company-required biometric hand scan because it violated his evangelical Christian beliefs.

Beverly Butcher, Jr., a 35-year employee of Consul Energy and the Consolidation Coal Company, insists that he cannot in good conscience allow the company to embed the biometric device in his hand because of his concerns that the technology may be a precursor to the "Mark of the Beast" mentioned in the New Testament book of Revelation, according to the lawsuit.



Central to Butcher's concern is Revelation 13:16, which some Christians believe refers to people being forced to receive a mark in their hands or foreheads which indicates their allegiance to the "anti-Christ" over Jesus Christ.

"Butcher repeatedly told mining officials that submitting to a biometric hand scanner violated his sincerely held religious beliefs as an Evangelical Christian," recalled an [EEOC press release](#) on the case. "He also wrote the mining superintendent and human resources manager a letter explaining the relationship between hand-scanning technology and the Mark of the Beast and antichrist discussed in the Book of Revelation of the New Testament and requesting an exemption from the hand scanning based on his religious beliefs."

According to [World](#) magazine, Recognition Systems, the company that sold and installed the scanners, responded to Butcher's concerns with a letter outlining its own supposed interpretation of the Revelation scripture. The company insisted that the verse in question applied only to the right hand and forehead and suggested that Butcher receive the mark in his left hand.

While Butcher countered by offering to continue keeping a manual record, as he had for decades, company officials held firm to Recognition's interpretation, insisting that Butcher use his left hand. But the EEOC pointed out that the mining company allowed at least two employees with hands that would not accommodate the technology to keep manual records, demonstrating that it was willing to make exceptions to its policy.

"In religious accommodation cases, the standard is not whether company officials agree with or share the employee's religious beliefs," said Butcher's EEOC attorney Debra M. Lawrence. "Instead, the focus is on whether the employer can provide an accommodation without incurring an undue hardship."

The EEOC filed the suit against the company after it had attempted to resolve the issue outside of court. "In this case, the mining companies not only lost the services of a long-tenured employee, they also



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violated federal law when they obstinately refused to consider easy alternatives to their new hand-scanning time and attendance system to accommodate Mr. Butcher's religious beliefs," declared EEOC spokesman Spencer H. Lewis, Jr.

The company insists that it did all it could to accommodate Butcher's religious convictions before terminating his employment. "In appropriate cases we make reasonable accommodations to address any conflict with sincerely held religious beliefs," said company spokeswoman Lynn Seay in a statement.



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