

Dancers sue strip club over wages

Boston Herald - Boston, Mass.
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Date: Oct 21, 2009
Start Page: 24
Section: BUSINESS
Text Word Count: 378

Document Text

Two Golden Banana strippers say they've been stripped of their employee rights.

So they've filed suit against the Peabody peel palace, claiming it illegally classified them as independent contractors to avoid paying them any wages, overtime and benefits.

Kayla L. Jenks of Reading and Nayelis Calana of Methuen maintain their nude bumping and gyrating qualifies them as Golden Banana employees because they're the star attractions of the infamous Route 1 "gentleman's club."

Jenks and Calana, who are in their 20s and have worked at the Golden Banana since December 2007, work for tips only.

The strippers say they deserve at least the state's full \$8 hourly minimum wage because the club takes back a portion of their tips in fees. They must pay the club a \$50 to \$150 fee per shift to dance and an additional fee if they don't participate in a scheduled dance, court documents state.

The lawsuit, filed in Salem Superior Court, maintains the Golden Banana is violating the state's independent contractor law, which classifies workers as "employees" if they perform the primary work of a business and if their work is substantially controlled by the business. The Golden Banana controls almost all aspects of the strippers' jobs, including when they work and their wardrobes and dance music, according to court documents.

Jenks and Calana declined comment through their Boston attorney.

"People are paying a cover charge . . . and inflated prices for drinks, and it's all because of these dancers who don't receive any wages or protections," attorney Tod Cochran said. "The Golden Banana has been saving money on taxes, workmen's comp., unemployment and Social Security by not paying the dancers a penny."

Owners of the Golden Banana could not be reached for comment.

About 70 dancers could join the suit if it gets class-action status, according to Cochran.

The lawsuit mirrors two others filed by Cochran on behalf of strippers at Ten's Show Club in Salisbury last month and King Arthur's Lounge in Chelsea in 2007.

In August, a Suffolk Superior Court judge ruled that King Arthur's misclassified its strippers as contractors, paving the way for them to receive back wages and damages. Club owners maintained the dancers provided entertainment much like a TV or pool table.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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