

Class-action suit filed against U.S. Space & Rocket Center

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By Margo Gray



Some current and former employees are suing for backed pay. (Source: WAFF file)

HUNTSVILLE, AL (WAFF) -

A class-action lawsuit has been filed against one of the state's busiest and most popular tourist attractions, the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville.

Some current and former employees have joined forces to sue the center for backed pay - specifically for extra income they say they earned for working state holidays.

Three employees are listed in the suit (PDF) thus far, but attorneys said they expect more to join in.

The lawsuit said the center has about 120 employees currently, but this could also impact past employees and even seasonal workers. Those who filed the suit want to make sure the employees of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center are paid according to state law.

The suit claims that for decades, the center has disregarded the state's observed paid holidays. It includes dates such as Robert E. Lee's Birthday, Confederate Memorial Day, and George Washington's Birthday, among others.

It goes on to state that the center is a state-run entity and should be following the law. On top of that, the employees claim the center has not been paying longevity pay. This is a pay increase for long-time workers. The suit claims what the center has been paying is not even close to the increase mandated by the state.

Attorneys representing the employees who filed the suit said they expect a state audit's findings to lead to changes at the Space & Rocket Center. The audit contained eight findings of non-compliance, including the issues of longevity pay and state holidays.

"Some of the holidays, certainly the Space & Rocket Center is going to be open," said Eric Artrip of Mastando & Artrip, who is representing the workers. "It's their prerogative to make their employees work on these state holidays, but if they do that, they should be paying them holiday pay, and that would be fair."

Representatives for the Space & Rocket Center said it is their policy not to comment on pending litigation.

Artrip said they will ask the judge to make a decision on how far they will go back to collect if they win out.

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