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**LEGAL SERVICES OF NEW JERSEY NEWSLETTER PINPOINTS COMMON
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF SOME EMPLOYEES**

EDISON — New Jersey has a long-standing reputation for its laws and rules protecting the rights of workers, but there are times when people may mistakenly assume such safeguards apply to their employment circumstances.

The latest newsletter of Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) centers on common misconceptions about employee rights in various situations.

The bilingual publication, “Looking Out For Your Legal Rights,” may be viewed online at www.lsnjlaw.org.

Also included in the publication are separate articles on types of disability insurance and benefits, renters’ rights, and a full scope of details and deadlines for the November 5 general election. Readers are reminded that October 15 is the deadline for registering to vote.

One example of an employment-related misconception is that an employer must have a good reason to fire a worker. That does not apply across the board as workers hired as at-will employees have no such protection. Further, even if the reason for the firing was baseless or untrue, the law does not give at-will employees the right to turn to the court to get their jobs back.

While some workers may believe they can sue their employers for harassment if their supervisor doesn't like them or yells at them, they will not get their day in court absent a discriminatory reason. That is because harassment only is illegal if the complaint is tied to a protected basis or class of individuals such as their sex, race, ethnicity, age, disability, or some other protected category. Incidentally, if workers believe they are being sexually harassed but have no witnesses to prove it, under some circumstances they are permitted to make audio recording of the happenings, though it is advisable to consult beforehand with an attorney.

Employees are mistaken if they believe employers can reduce paychecks as compensation for worker damages to company property or cash register shortages. Such deductions are prohibited by the state's wage and hour statute.

With an important caveat, it might come as a surprise to workers when they cannot collect for unused vacation time. Employers are not required to pay for unused vacation time unless such payment is stipulated in the employee handbook or company policy.

Among the other examples of common misconceptions is one that undercuts determinations by some employees to hire an attorney and sue for sexual harassment. Under state law, in most such situations, employees are required to first utilize and bring the complaint before the employer's internal and harassment/discrimination policy or body. Bypassing that procedure may later result in any lawsuit being thrown out.

Further information is available by contacting LSNJ's Workers Legal Rights Project through the LSNJLAW Hotline, online at www.lsnjlawhotline.org, or by calling 1-888-576-5529.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ), located in Edison, heads the state's Legal Services system, a network of six independent nonprofit corporations that provides free essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people in all 21 counties.