



STATEMENT DM510

**“Mormon Mafia” Cited in FBI Discrimination Case**

Three hundred-eleven Hispanic FBI agents won a class action suit against the agency on September 30. A central argument in the suit was that their careers were stymied by the religious bias against non-Mormons of ranking FBI officials who are Mormon (LDS).

Charges of a “Mormon Mafia” in the FBI’s Los Angeles office have been circulating for years, but no one had taken the FBI to court on the matter until Matt Perez, an agent working out of El Paso, initiated the suit.

In ruling in favor of the plaintiffs, Judge Lucius Bunton of the U.S. District Court, Western District of Texas, El Paso Division, agreed that the Hispanic agents’ careers were affected by discrimination in hiring practices and promotions. Bunton said there was insufficient evidence for him to rule the agency had discriminated against the plaintiffs in issuing assignments.

The plaintiffs sued for \$5 million in damages and retroactive promotions and back pay. At press time the judge had not yet made a decision on the damages award.

The FBI, admitting the discrimination practices and pledging to end them with the recent appointment of a new director, had no plans to appeal the ruling.

Just after the case was filed, Richard T. Bretzing, 49, head of the Los Angeles division of the FBI since 1982, retired to become the Managing Director of the LDS Church’s security department, according to the LDS *Church News*. Bretzing retired after 27 years’ service (three years short of the 30-year government retirement plan).