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## Three Sergeants File Civil Rights Lawsuit Against Rehoboth Beach

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By Leanne Murray [CONNECT](#)

REHOBOTH BEACH, Del. - Three veteran police Sergeants have filed a joint civil rights lawsuit against the City of Rehoboth Beach, along with Mayor and Police Chief, for denying them promotions. The suit reportedly claims that the City, Mayor Samuel R. Cooper, and Chief Keith Banks didn't post vacancies for two Lieutenants positions that were then filled, with an apparently unqualified applicant. The Sergeants reportedly feel that qualified candidates couldn't apply, as the positions were created and filled, without being posted.

The three Sergeants, Benjamin R. Mitchell II, Scott A. O'Bier, and Victor Letonoff, say that one of the people who was promoted, worked as a detective and ranked as a Corporal, but never Sergeant. The Rehoboth Beach Police Department's promotion policy reportedly requires that an officer must have been ranked as Sergeant for two years in order to become a Lieutenant.

The lawsuit also states that City Code was violated when the vacancies weren't posted, as only the City Manager, who had reportedly retired without an immediate successor, could make the decision to not post. Later, after the promotions were made, the Sergeants claim Chief Banks tried to amend the promotion policy, by removing the two year Sergeant requirement. That amendment was reportedly rejected by the Police Union.

John M. LaRosa, attorney for the three plaintiffs, stated: "Sergeants Benny Mitchell, Scott O'Bier, and Victor Letonoff are long term, loyal public servants of the City of Rehoboth Beach. They have seen their stellar police careers dead ended by a Mayor and a Chief who think they do not have to obey Police Department Directives, the City Code, or the U.S. Constitution. Mayor Cooper and Chief Banks are not above the Law. They cannot make up the rules as they go along. We are intent on making sure that the rule of Law is restored to the City of Rehoboth Beach and its Police Department."