

United States District Court
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
SHERMAN DIVISION

JAMIE M. BUNETTO

Plaintiff,

v.

THE CITY OF ANNA, TEXAS

Defendant.

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Civil Action No. 4:21-CV-00413
 Judge Mazzant

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

Pending before the Court is Defendant’s Motion for Summary Judgment (Dkt. #10). Having considered the motion and the relevant pleadings, the Court finds that the motion should be **DENIED**.

BACKGROUND

Plaintiff brings federal discrimination claims based on gender under Title VII (42 U.S.C. § 2000e) (“Title VII”) and age under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (29 U.S.C. § 623) (“ADEA”), as well as corresponding state law gender and age discrimination claims under the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act (TEX. LABOR CODE § 21.051) (“TCHRA”) (Dkt. #1).

On January 28, 2022, Defendant filed its motion for summary judgment (Dkt. #10). On April 29, 2022, after more discovery took place, Defendant filed a supplemental brief (Dkt. #18). On May 20, 2022, Plaintiff filed his response (Dkt. #20). On June 1, 2022, Defendant filed its reply (Dkt. #23).

LEGAL STANDARD

The purpose of summary judgment is to isolate and dispose of factually unsupported claims or defenses. *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323–24 (1986). Summary judgment is proper

under Rule 56(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure “if the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a). A dispute about a material fact is genuine when “the evidence is such that a reasonable jury could return a verdict for the nonmoving party.” *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986). Substantive law identifies which facts are material. *Id.* The trial court “must resolve all reasonable doubts in favor of the party opposing the motion for summary judgment.” *Casey Enters., Inc. v. Am. Hardware Mut. Ins. Co.*, 655 F.2d 598, 602 (5th Cir. 1981).

The party seeking summary judgment bears the initial burden of informing the court of its motion and identifying “depositions, documents, electronically stored information, affidavits or declarations, stipulations (including those made for purposes of the motion only), admissions, interrogatory answers, or other materials” that demonstrate the absence of a genuine issue of material fact. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c)(1)(A); *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 323. If the movant bears the burden of proof on a claim or defense for which it is moving for summary judgment, it must come forward with evidence that establishes “beyond peradventure *all* of the essential elements of the claim or defense.” *Fontenot v. Upjohn Co.*, 780 F.2d 1190, 1194 (5th Cir. 1986). Where the nonmovant bears the burden of proof, the movant may discharge the burden by showing that there is an absence of evidence to support the nonmovant’s case. *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 325; *Byers v. Dall. Morning News, Inc.*, 209 F.3d 419, 424 (5th Cir. 2000).

Once the movant has carried its burden, the nonmovant must “respond to the motion for summary judgment by setting forth particular facts indicating there is a genuine issue for trial.” *Byers*, 209 F.3d at 424 (citing *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248–49). A nonmovant must present affirmative evidence to defeat a properly supported motion for summary judgment. *Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 257. Mere denials of material facts, unsworn allegations, or arguments and assertions in

briefs or legal memoranda will not suffice to carry this burden. Rather, the Court requires “significant probative evidence” from the nonmovant to dismiss a request for summary judgment. *In re Mun. Bond Reporting Antitrust Litig.*, 672 F.2d 436, 440 (5th Cir. 1982) (quoting *Ferguson v. Nat’l Broad. Co.*, 584 F.2d 111, 114 (5th Cir. 1978)). The Court must consider all of the evidence but “refrain from making any credibility determinations or weighing the evidence.” *Turner v. Baylor Richardson Med. Ctr.*, 476 F.3d 337, 343 (5th Cir. 2007).

ANALYSIS

After a careful review of the record and the arguments presented, the Court is not convinced that Defendant has met its burden demonstrating that there are no material issues of fact entitling it to judgment as a matter of law. The case should proceed to trial.

CONCLUSION

It is therefore **ORDERED** that Defendant’s Motion for Summary Judgment (Dkt. #10) is hereby **DENIED**.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

SIGNED this 29th day of July, 2022.


AMOS L. MAZZANT
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE