

DLA Piper Faces Lawsuit for Wrongful Termination of Pregnant Lawyer



DLA Piper, a prominent international law firm, is currently facing a discrimination lawsuit filed by former attorney Anisha Mehta. The lawsuit, filed in Manhattan federal court, alleges that Mehta was wrongfully terminated from her position after requesting maternity leave.

According to the complaint, Mehta, a senior associate in the firm's intellectual property group, was fired in October 2022, just days after submitting her leave request. At the time of her termination, Mehta was six months pregnant with her first child. The lawsuit argues that DLA Piper cited performance issues as the reason for her dismissal, despite Mehta receiving three raises and a significant bonus of over \$100,000 during her one-year tenure with the firm. Furthermore, Mehta claims that her superiors consistently praised her work.

However, Mehta asserts that the firm's decision to terminate her employment was motivated by a desire to avoid paying her salary during her planned maternity leave. It is alleged that DLA Piper was experiencing a decline in legal work and was facing pressure from clients regarding billing rates. In response to these circumstances, Mehta believes that the firm resorted to terminating her to avoid the financial burden of her leave.

DLA Piper has not yet issued a public comment in response to the lawsuit. The firm's spokesperson has remained silent on the matter.

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Anisha Mehta's attorney, Jeanne Christensen of the plaintiffs' firm Wigdor, claims that DLA Piper engaged in "blatant gender discrimination" and prioritized profits over gender parity. The lawsuit accuses the firm of violating federal pregnancy discrimination and retaliation laws. As a result, Mehta is seeking unspecified damages and attorney fees.

It is worth noting that while several large U.S. law firms announced layoffs in the past year due to a decline in profitable transactional work, DLA Piper did not publicly report any layoffs. In fact, the firm experienced a revenue growth of 6.2% in 2022, as reported by The American Lawyer.

In addition to the lawsuit, Mehta also filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in March. The EEOC investigates claims of employment discrimination and may take legal action on behalf of the employee if deemed necessary.

The outcome of this lawsuit will likely have implications for DLA Piper and may shine a spotlight on the issue of gender discrimination within the legal industry. As the case unfolds, the public will be closely monitoring the proceedings and awaiting DLA Piper's response to the serious allegations put forth by Anisha Mehta.