



Pinterest's Former Chief Operating Officer Levies Claims Of Gender Bias Against Company

Insights

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Former Pinterest Chief Operating Officer and top ranking female executive Françoise Brougher just filed a 17-page [complaint](#) in San Francisco Superior Court against Pinterest alleging a toxic work environment that allowed female executives to be excluded and silenced, which she claims led to her own termination. The August 11 complaint alleges claims of gender discrimination, retaliation, and wrongful termination in violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and the California Labor Code.

Allegations Made In The Complaint

Ms. Brougher joined Pinterest in March 2018 as the Chief Operating Officer. Prior to joining Pinterest, she worked in leadership roles at Charles Schwab, Google, and Square. In her complaint, Ms. Brougher claims she was abruptly fired from Pinterest in April 2020 in retaliation for pointing out biases in the Company's hiring, compensation, and promotion processes.

As part of her complaint, Ms. Brougher alleges she was offered a less favorable compensation structure than her male peers when she joined the company. She claims she was able to obtain information regarding her compensation after Pinterest filed to go public in 2019, at which time she learned she was paid less than her male peers and that her equity grants were tied to a vesting period – whereas some of her executive male peers' grants were not.

Ms. Brougher alleges she raised concerns regarding her disparate pay with the company's CEO, who instructed her to speak with Human Resources. In response to her complaints, she says her compensation was adjusted. However, she claims that after the company went public, she was left out of important meetings, criticized for not being more "collaborative," and subjected to derogatory comments by her male peers.

As a result of her employment being terminated, she is seeking compensatory and punitive damages as well as injunctive relief to prevent further violations of the FEHA and California Labor Code.

What Does This Mean For Employers?

Ms. Brougher's lawsuit follows a pattern of gender discrimination claims being brought against employers. Indeed, just last month, former vice president of marketing, Emily Kramer, filed a lawsuit in San Francisco Superior Court against her employer, Carta, a financial technology start-up,

accusing them of paying her less than her male peers and claiming the company retaliated against her for speaking up about gender equality and diversity.

As gender discrimination claims continue to become more prevalent, the lesson for employers is simple — now is the time to re-examine your pay practices and how they relate to gender (and other protected categories). If you fail to do so, you could find yourself on the receiving end of a lawsuit. We will continue to monitor these proceedings and provide updates as warranted.

Related People



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