

4th Woman Joins U.S. Bias Suit Against Bloomberg L.P.

By Ray Rivera

Another woman has joined the federal government's lawsuit against Bloomberg L.P., the financial services and media company founded by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, accusing the company of discriminating against pregnant employees.

The woman, Monica Prestia, says in the lawsuit that she was hired as an account executive with Bloomberg in 1997 and within two years was promoted to Latin American sales manager for Bloomberg Television. After she had her first child in 2005, she received the worst performance review of her career, her compensation fell, and a supervisor who could not have children of her own

was openly hostile to her, the suit claims. The hostility only increased when Ms. Prestia complained to the Human Resources Department, which did not take action, the complaint states. At one point, according to the suit, a different supervisor asked her, "What is this, your third baby?"

Because of those and other statements by her supervisors, Ms. Prestia "was forced to fight the stereotyped perception that she wished to simply have her baby and a full-time mother," the complaint states.

Ms. Prestia becomes the fourth woman to join the class-action lawsuit, filed in September by the Equal

Employment Opportunity Commission.

The company, which is proud of what it calls its family friendly policies, denied Ms. Prestia's allegations but is not opposing her motion to intervene, said Judith Czelusiniak, a company spokes-woman.

Ms. Prestia had filed a separate federal lawsuit against the company in June after filing a complaint with the commission.

Richard A. Roth, Ms. Prestia's lawyer, said the commission contacted his client after filing the class action suit in September.

"The realized the strength of Monica's case and urged us to join in, and we did,"

Mr. Roth said, adding that she would drop her own lawsuit.

Elizabeth Grossman, regional attorney for the commission, said she could not say how much the case would grow. She declined to comment on Ms. Prestia's case.

Mayor Bloomberg resigned his chairmanship of the company during his first run for mayor in 2001, but remains its majority shareholder and stays in touch with company executives on major decisions, his aides say.

The suit is seeking monetary damages and an order that the company put new policies into effect to prevent discrimination.

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The Roth Law Firm, PLLC
545 Fifth Avenue, Suite 960, New York, NY (212) 542-8882
www.rrothlaw.com