

Amazon Sued by Five Women Alleging Discrimination, Retaliation

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Amazon.com Inc. was hit Wednesday with lawsuits from five women alleging harassment, discrimination and retaliation.

The women, who have held jobs in the company's headquarters, regional offices and logistics operations, are all represented by Wigdor LLP, the law firm representing a plaintiff in a high-profile discrimination and harassment lawsuit targeting Amazon and filed earlier this year.

"These five people really represent a cross-section of employees," said Jeanne Christensen, a partner with the firm. "We definitely saw a pattern in stories that we were being told."

Amazon spokesperson Jaci Anderson said the company was investigating each of incidents detailed in the lawsuits and has found no evidence to support the allegations. "Amazon works hard to foster a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture," Anderson said in an email. "We do not tolerate discrimination or harassment in any form, and employees are encouraged to raise concerns to any member of management or through an anonymous ethics hotline with no risk of retaliation."

The lawsuits come as Amazon, known for an aggressive and intense workplace culture, faces pressure to make life better for its workers. Shareholders are set to vote next week on a resolution, filed by the New York State Common Retirement Fund, urging the company to audit its impact on civil rights, equity, diversity and inclusion. Top shareholder advisory groups have recommended investors vote for the proposal.

In April, Amazon publicly outlined goals to promote more women and Black employees, and in his final letter to shareholders as chief executive officer, Jeff Bezos pledged to focus more on workers' well-being, saying "we need a better vision for how we create value for our employees."

In one of the lawsuits, filed Wednesday in federal court in Arizona, Tiffany Gordwin, who joined Amazon's human resources group in 2019, alleged she "was treated like a second-class citizen by the majority of her supervisors, all White." A Black woman, Gordon was rejected for promotions in favor of younger, less qualified White men, she says in the complaint.

Emily Sousa, hired at Amazon last year as a shift manager at a Pennsylvania facility, says a manager made her "the target of constant harassment" and attempted to cultivate a sexual relationship. She was demoted and sent to another warehouse after rejecting his advances, she alleges in a complaint filed in federal court in Delaware.

Diana Cuervo, a Latina and former manager in an Amazon warehouse in Everett, Washington, says she was terminated after complaining to human resources about a manager who she says subjected her to repeated racist remarks.

Pearl Thomas, a Black human resources employee who worked for the Amazon Web Services cloud division at Seattle headquarters, said in a complaint that during a virtual meeting to discuss post-pandemic return to work plans, her manager muttered the N-word at her before hanging up.

And in a case filed in California, Cindy Warner, a gay woman hired in February 2020 for a senior role in Amazon Web Services' professional services group, says she was targeted for abusive and sexist treatment by "a boys' club where predominantly White male executives jealously guard their sphere of influence." Warner, who was fired in April, is alleging violations of equal pay laws.