



Mothers Accuse Goldman Sachs, Citigroup of Discrimination

Woman Says She Was 'Mommy-Tracked' and Then Fired After Having Kids

By DALIA FAHMY

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Nobody said it's easy to balance [Wall Street](#) and family.

Two women have filed complaints against Wall Street banks, claiming they were discriminated against in their jobs after taking time off to have children. They are both seeking financial compensation.

Charlotte Hanna, a former [Goldman Sachs](#) vice president in the human resources division, claimed she was demoted after having her first child and fired while on maternity leave for her second child.

Dorly Hazan-Amir, an associate at Citigroup's asset finance division, claimed she was treated poorly after announcing her pregnancy and demoted after returning from maternity leave.

"Working mothers on Wall Street not only have to contend with the newfound obligations of caring for their child, but must also overcome the stereotype and biases that they are unable to do both," said Douglas Wigdor, the lawyer representing Hanna and Hazan-Amir.

Mommy-Tracked

In her suit, Hanna claimed that she was "mommy-tracked" into positions that hurt her earnings potential and professional growth after she had her first child and took advantage of a Goldman Sachs program that allowed her to work three days a week.

At the time, the suit claimed, she was demoted from her position as the head of her department and moved from her private office into a cubicle. Then, while on maternity leave with her second child, she was allegedly told her position had been eliminated only to discover later that another employee had been hired to take over her duties.

"I was shocked to learn that I was being fired while I was on maternity leave," she told ABC News.com via e-mail. "I wanted to continue my career at Goldman but, unfortunately, they do not view a woman who has had a child as a productive employee."

Goldman Sachs said Hanna's case is without merit.

"Ms. Hanna was treated very fairly throughout her employment at the firm, and we are very proud of the programs and initiatives we have in place to support working mothers," a Goldman Sachs spokeswoman said.

To the firm's credit, it has often been recognized for its efforts in hiring women and bringing mothers back into the fold. The firm was named by Working Mother magazine last year as one of the best 100 companies to work for, based partly on the "Returnship" program it launched a few years ago to help women who have left their jobs "ramp" back onto their careers.

'Butt of Jokes'

Hazan-Amir's case is slightly different. She complained about a long-standing "boys club" culture at Citi and claimed that supervisors have discriminated against her because of her gender since the beginning of her tenure. When she became pregnant, the attitude of her bosses reportedly worsened, she claimed.

One manager allegedly asked her whether she planned to be a "career mom" or a "mom mom," which Hazan-Amir said was inappropriate because it implied she had to choose between career and family.

Rough Relationship

Another manager allegedly told her if she wanted to continue to work in the group, she would have to put her career first and her family second, she said.

"My pregnancy became the butt of jokes in the office as my male co-workers discussed setting up a pool to discuss how much weight I would gain as a result of my pregnancy," she said.

Citigroup did not return a call for comment.

Women and Wall Street have always had a rough relationship. Dozens of other complaints and lawsuits have been brought against banks over the years, from women all along the pay scale.

[Morgan Stanley](#) famously settled two suits for more than \$100 million in 2004 and 2007, brought by thousands of female employees claiming they were denied promotions and equal pay because of their gender.

Smith Barney paid out \$33 million in a similar suit two years ago.

Neither company admitted wrongdoing.

"Employers have become more savvy, so they often don't say blatantly discriminatory things to women, but there are many cases of more subtle forms of marginalization," said Dina Bakst, co-president of A Better Balance, a New York-based non-profit that advocates for women's rights.

While firms often have programs to help parents balance their responsibilities, women sometimes say the programs feel like a dead-end.

"Many women feel they are mommy-tracked and penalized for taking that path," Bakst said.

Nina Godiwalla, a former investment banker at Morgan Stanley who is writing a book about her experience as a woman in banking, said life for Wall Street mothers can be difficult.

"Breaking into that culture as a woman is really about you becoming as closely as possible one of the guys," said Godiwalla, author of "Suits: A Woman on Wall Street."

Mothers often felt pressure to prove their loyalty to the bank, she said, by participating on conference calls right before giving birth, or showing up at work the day after delivering.

Changing Tide?

"When you're that person who says, 'I'm taking three months off for my kids,' then suddenly your loyalty is in question," she said.

Women who want to start a family often decide to leave the financial business altogether, or opt for less stressful careers at regional banks or small investment funds.

But Hanna and Hazan-Amir said they are unwilling to let go without a fight.

Hazan-Amir still works at Citi, while Hanna said she would like her old job at Goldman Sachs back.

"I want other women who have had children to know that they have done nothing wrong and that they are not alone," she wrote in the e-mail. "Many do not want to stand up and fight against a big company like Goldman. Hopefully, when others see what I did, they too will have the courage to fight back."

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