

Synagogue Sued Over Firing of Pregnant Employee

Mark Hamblett, New York Law Journal
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Congregation Shearith Israel of the City of New York, a Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, has been sued for firing an employee after learning she was pregnant at the time of her Orthodox wedding ceremony.

Alana Shultz, program director at the Central Park West Congregation since 2004, alleges that Rabbi Meir Soloveichik and Congregation board member Michael Lustig broke the law when they fired her in July on the pretext her job was being terminated, and then attempted to "un-fire" her once they learned she had hired a lawyer.

Shultz was 19 weeks pregnant when she married on June 28. She was fired on July 21, the day after her honeymoon, in a meeting where she said the rabbi and Lustig refused to speak with her.

"Shockingly, rather than demonstrating inclusion and tolerance, defendants callously fired Ms. Shultz for her apparent failure to adhere to their religious morals, at a time when she was most vulnerable—six and a half pregnant months pregnant, visibly showing and in critical need of medical insurance," Shultz attorney Douglas Wigdor said in the complaint.

Mercedes Colwin, managing partner at the New York office of Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani represents the congregation in *Shultz v. Congregation Shearith Israel*, 15-cv-07473. Colwin did not immediately return a call for comment.

The case has been assigned to Southern District [Judge J. Paul Oetken](#).

