

Deutsche Bank Hit With Disability Bias Claims By Ex-Worker

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Deutsche Bank AG mistreated an Indian employee after she said she had to go on medical leave and then fired her after she complained about a training session's racial bias, according to a suit filed in New York federal court.

Rajnarind Kaur, who is a Sikh, hit her former employer and ex-supervisor Sandro Boeri with a federal complaint on Thursday claiming she faced discrimination because of a disability and also suffered retaliation. Kaur claimed that, despite more than eight years of employment, she wasn't given any "meaningful" chance to rise in the ranks after returning from treatment for a brain tumor and that she was fired after she complained that workers were being discriminated against because of national origin, ethnicity or race.

"Rather than offering words of support or concern in response to Ms. Kaur's disclosure, Mr. Boeri took the opportunity to send a clear message that he did not want to 'deal with' an employee with medical issues," the complaint said. "To that end, Mr. Boeri began baselessly painting Ms. Kaur as a 'mismatch' for group audit and, upon her return from leave, denied her any meaningful opportunity to advance."

Kaur — who alleges her former employer flouted the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, New York State Human Rights Law and New York City Human Rights Law — started at Deutsche Bank in 2010 and worked in a variety of positions before landing in the group audit department in 2016, her complaint said. Even though she didn't have background in the area, she said she still got good feedback regarding her performance.

The following year, however, she told her boss that she was suffering from a brain tumor and would need treatment, she said. She was then faced with "unnecessary disciplinary measures" and held "to an unreasonable standard," her complaint said.

When she got back from leave a few months later, she said, she still faced mistreatment, having her responsibilities in the department cut and having her bid to take a certified internal auditor certification test denied.

Additionally, she said she had brought up issues regarding a 2018 training session which allegedly "painted South Asians, such as Ms. Kaur and other participants, as being prone to engage in fraudulent activities related to terrorism."

Just a couple of months later, Kaur said she was told that she was being fired, with Boeri allegedly saying it wasn't "working out" and that she was being let go because of purported "integrity issues."

“This is yet another case where Deutsche Bank has mistreated an employee in a time of need,” David E. Gottlieb, a Wigdor LLP partner who is representing Kaur in the suit, said in a statement. “Ms. Kaur was harassed after her return from medical leave and tried to correct this behavior by reporting the discrimination to HR, only to be fired directly after she complained.”

A Deutsche Bank spokesperson declined to comment to Law360 on Friday.

Kaur is represented by David E. Gottlieb and Kenneth D. Walsh of Wigdor LLP.

Counsel information for Deutsche Bank was not immediately available on Friday.

The case is Kaur v. Deutsche Bank AG et al., case number 1:19-cv-02505, in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.