

WeWork's Adam Neumann has now been accused of pregnancy discrimination

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For months, WeWork has been in free fall, beset with financial troubles, a canceled IPO, and lawsuits claiming discrimination at the hands of ousted CEO and cofounder Adam Neumann. Now, Neumann is facing allegations of pregnancy discrimination from a former chief of staff.

As reported by the *New York Times*, in an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint filed Thursday, Medina Bardhi claimed that she had faced repeated discrimination, including Neumann's references to her maternity leave as a "vacation" or "retirement." In five years at WeWork, Bardhi went through two pregnancies and claims to have been demoted on both occasions. (The first time Bardhi got pregnant, Neumann reportedly gave her role to a male employee and paid him more than double what she earned.) According to the complaint, she was fired earlier this month. Bardhi also names WeWork co-president Jennifer Berrent in the complaint, who she claims said, "Wow, you're getting big," in earshot of another WeWork executive.

Bardhi had initially held off on telling Neumann she was pregnant, only divulging the information when she realized she could no longer join him on business trips, "due to his penchant for bringing marijuana on chartered flights and smoking it throughout the flight while in an enclosed cabin," the complaint said. Bardhi also claims Neumann's behavior gave her pause even before she started at WeWork, when he asked in an interview about her plans to get married and pregnant.

"WeWork intends to vigorously defend itself against this claim," a WeWork spokesperson said in a statement to *Fast Company*. "We have zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind. We are committed to moving the company forward and building a company and culture that our employees can be proud of."

Bardhi's lawyer told the *Times* that he hopes the EEOC pursues class-action charges, in light of the myriad allegations levied against WeWork. (Filing an EEOC complaint is usually the first step toward bringing a lawsuit, though the EEOC itself only pursues a handful of lawsuits.) But WeWork, for all its issues, isn't the only tech company accused of mistreating pregnant employees. Most recently, Chelsey Glasson, an ex-Google employee, brought pregnancy discrimination claims against her former employer, in an EEOC complaint filed last month.