

USA Today employee claims she was fired after death of her baby

[DT dailytelegraph.com.au/business/work/employee-claims-she-was-fired-after-the-death-of-her-baby-son/news-](https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/business/work/employee-claims-she-was-fired-after-the-death-of-her-baby-son/news-)

November 24,
2019

When Serena Bhaduri fell pregnant in 2018 she was thrilled – but tragically, her joy was short-lived.

Her son, who was born in November 2018, died just two months later in January 2019.

Despite this “awful loss”, Ms Bhaduri returned to work as a top-performing digital sales director at US news publication *USA Today* the following month.

But soon after, she claims her grief was compounded by her direct supervisor, who accused the grieving mother of having a “negative” attitude which caused her co-workers to suffer “low morale”.

According to a complaint filed on Ms Bhaduri’s behalf in the US District Court Southern District of New York, the supervisor began “micromanaging” Ms Bhaduri and subjecting her to “heightened and unwarranted criticism”.

In May she was suddenly stripped of a number of her high revenue clients – with some being reassigned to a “newly hired, single male employee, who did not have children”.

The female supervisor allegedly told Ms Bhaduri that she was the first pregnant employee she had ever managed.

According to the legal documents seen by news.com.au, Ms Bhaduri complained about her treatment to other high-ranking workers and even asked to be moved to another department, but was repeatedly “brushed aside”.

Serena Bhaduri claims she was fired after falling pregnant a second time. Picture: Facebook

She ended up taking a month of bereavement leave to mourn her son – which she was legally entitled to – but “feared” she would be discriminated against by her boss.

Then, in August 2019, *USA Today* fired Ms Bhaduri after she revealed she was pregnant again, citing her “negative attitude”, claiming it created a “toxic” environment and that she “did not take direction well”.

The official complaint also claims another female employee from the same team was also fired several weeks later after she also fell pregnant.

Ms Bhaduri is now seeking damages over violations of the Family Medical Leave Act, alleging pregnancy discrimination.

In a statement, her lawyer Jeanne M Christensen, a partner at Wigdor LLP, said Ms Bhaduri's treatment had been "horrific".

"*USA Today's* mission is to 'serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation'," Ms Christensen said.

"What happened to Ms Bhaduri is the opposite of this stated mission.

"If *USA Today* wants to serve as a forum for meaningful discussion, it needs to get its own house in order and right this horrific wrong."

According to the legal complaint, Ms Bhaduri's employer "did not want a female employee that might temporarily need time off".

"It definitely did not want a female employee around who had taken maternity leave the year before, taken four weeks of bereavement after her infant son died, and was pregnant again," the document states.

"It is truly astonishing that *USA Today* would punish and shun Ms Bhaduri at a time when she was most vulnerable, simply because it was potentially costly and inconvenient to continue employing a pregnant woman.

USA Today violated the very laws put in place to protect employees such as Ms Bhaduri. Her termination is but another clear example of the rampant and egregious discrimination against pregnant employees that too often are treated as expendable second-class citizens in the workplace."

USA Today has been contacted for comment.