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I represent Debrahlee Lorenzana. Today she has filed a complaint against Citibank, her former employer. She filed the complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights alleging sex discrimination in employment and retaliation, and asked for an investigation by this state agency which has the jurisdiction, and we believe the duty, to investigate Debrahlee's allegations of a violation of state laws.

Debrahlee began to work as a business banking officer (BBO) for Citibank at the Chrysler Center branch in September 2008. Although she always dressed in compliance with Citibank's dress code, management almost immediately began making comments about Debrahlee's appearance and dress. She was told that she should not wear pencil skirts, turtlenecks, or business suits that showed her "figure" and that her pants were too tight.

Debrahlee alleges that to the contrary, none of her outfits were too small or tight or particularly form fitting. She pointed out to management that her dress was business attire and that she was covered up far more than the tellers in the branch as they serve customers.

In response, she was told that this was management's business, not Debrahlee's. Management also told her that her manner of dress was not appropriate because she drew too much attention. When she protested that she was wearing business attire, that she was not violating the dress code, and that other employees dressed in more revealing clothing, she alleges that she was told that her body was very different from the others and that is why it was ok for others to dress like that, but not for her to dress that way.

This issue of dress and appearance was only one of a number of ways that Debrahlee alleged that she was treated differently than were male employees on account of her gender.

In January of 2009, she contacted Citibank human resources (HR) to complain about discriminatory treatment. After that Debrahlee alleges that there was a decrease in comments relating to her appearance, but that a campaign of retaliation began against her.

Again she contacted HR and requested a transfer because of continued discrimination and the retaliation she was being forced to suffer.

Although she was transferred to Citibank's Rockefeller branch, it was a move that we allege was designed to insure that she would fail. At the new branch she was placed on the 2nd floor, not visible to customers and with no sign or other

indication of where she was located.

Another business banker was stationed on the ground floor, easily visible with signage to customers who walked in.

Although again she complained to HR that in this situation she would be unable to meet her quotas for opening new business accounts (given her location and the fact that all potential customers were being directed by Citibank to the other BBO there) on August 3, 2009, Debrahlee was in fact terminated. The reason given was failure to meet account quotas.

We allege that this termination was pretextual, retaliatory and unlawful. Every employee has the right to file a complaint of gender discrimination with their employer, without being punished by retaliatory conduct for having protested the gender discrimination. The law protects employees from retaliation, so that employees will not fear protesting their denial of equal employment opportunity based on gender.

The mistreatment of Debrahlee, a single mom who is the sole support of her child, by a large corporation which appears to be determined to engage in a punitive course of conduct to crush her after she complained of their sexist treatment will not be tolerated.

In addition to her lawsuit which will be arbitrated, we believe that the New

York State Division of Human Rights should also open an independent investigation into this matter. No woman should have to suffer what Debrahlee has been forced to endure and we are here to let Citibank know that we will fight back against this financial giant and we will win.

Gloria Allred
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representing Debrahlee Lorenzana
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