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We are here today to announce an unusual and important lawsuit on behalf of Teri James against San Diego Christian College (SDCC). We are alleging discrimination against Teri, on account of gender, pregnancy and marital status.

Teri (age 29) worked for SDCC for approximately 2 years from January 12, 2011 to October 19, 2012. She was employed as a Financial Aid Specialist. It was not part of her duties to interact with students at SDCC, except for students enrolled in online classes. Her interaction with the online students was on the telephone. Teri performed her job duties well and was given a very favorable review.

In 2012 Teri became pregnant. She was unmarried at the time. Although Teri did not disclose her pregnancy to her employer there was a rumor on campus that she was pregnant. She was contacted by her supervisor and HR and asked to come to a meeting without being given the reason for the meeting.

At the meeting with her supervisor she was asked if she was pregnant. Teri answered honestly that she was pregnant. At the subsequent meeting with the HR Director, her supervisor disclosed that Teri had said she was pregnant. The HR Director told her that as a result she had 2 options: resign or be terminated.

Teri indicated that she knew pregnant women had rights. The HR Director indicated that she was not being fired because she was pregnant. Instead he stated that she was being terminated because she had pre-marital sex.

Teri asked for a day to think about it. The next day she advised the HR Director that she was not resigning. She was then given a termination notice which stated: "Teri engaged in activity outside the scope of the Handbook and Community Covenant that does not build up the college's mission. Being an 'at-will' employer, SDCC decided to terminate the relationship between SDCC and Teri."

The Community Covenant states: "The traits that should not inhabit our lives are identified as abusive anger; malice; jealousy; lust; sexually immoral behavior including pre-marital sex, adultery, pornography, and homosexuality; evil desires; prejudice based on race, sex, or socioeconomic status; greed; idolatry; slander, profanity; lying; drunkenness, thievery and dishonesty."

After her termination her boyfriend, Brandon James, who had previously worked for SDCC and who is also the father to be of Teri's child was offered a job despite SDCC's knowledge that he had had pre-marital sex with Teri. Teri and Brandon have since married, but they had to move up the wedding date originally scheduled for January 19, 2013 to October 30, 2012 because Teri's termination caused her to lose her health plan. In order to be added to Brandon's health plan, she had to move the wedding date up by 3 months depriving her of her anticipated wedding ceremony with friends, family and invited guests.

Teri was understandably very upset by her termination. She told her employer “I know pregnant women have rights” and today Teri is asserting them.

This morning we filed a lawsuit on behalf of Teri against SDCC alleging:

1. PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING ACT (“FEHA”);
2. GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE FEHA;
3. MARITAL STATUS DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF THE FEHA;
4. GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 1, §8 OF THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION;
5. WRONGFUL TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN VIOLATION OF PUBLIC POLICY;
6. INVASION OF PRIVACY IN VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION;
7. UNLAWFUL USE OR DISCLOSURE OF EMPLOYEE MEDICAL INFORMATION IN VIOLATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL INFORMATION ACT;
8. INTENTIONAL INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

We are seeking injunctive relief and damages according to proof at trial.

Although the defendant calls itself San Diego Christian College, it is a business registered with the California Secretary of State. As such it is governed by the California Constitution and laws of California and we contend that it is not

permitted to terminate an employee because the college thinks that pre-marital sex leading to pregnancy is wrong.

Teri James and her husband Brandon (age 27) are very courageous to speak out against this injustice and today, Valentine's Day, is the perfect time to do it.

Teri is 6 months pregnant and she feels that her baby is a blessing. She was honest about her pregnancy and she was not willing to lie about it in order to keep her job.

We look forward to litigating this case for Teri so that SDCC and other employers will know that women have rights and they will assert them if necessary in a court of law.

Gloria Allred
Attorney at Law
Representing Teri James
February 14, 2013