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Former Mayo Clinic housekeeper files lawsuit alleging she was fired for retaliation

Rochester woman claims she was fired in retaliation for reporting she was sexually assaulted by a supervisor. Mayo Clinic denies the allegations.

Written By: [Emily Cutts](#) | 10:52 am, Jun. 29, 2021



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in its response, Mayo denied it wrongfully terminated the woman and said she failed to state a claim upon which relief may be granted and that she failed to exhaust other remedies.

Yelena Ryabchuk, through her attorneys, Emma R. Denny and Amanda R. Crain of Halunen Law in Minneapolis, filed the civil suit in Olmsted County District Court on May 5, 2021.

"Being terminated for reporting a sexual assault was to her, devastating," Denny said of Ryabchuk. "She really enjoyed her job, enjoyed her coworkers — so to lose her job for what she felt was reporting a sexual assault, one of the worst and most traumatic events in her life, felt like a revictimization."

The civil complaint alleges that with Ryabchuk's firing, the clinic committed sex discrimination and reprisal in violation of the state's Human Rights Act. The lawsuit asks the court to order relief in the form of "all available compensatory damages including loss of past and future income, emotional distress, loss of reputation and related damages," as well as the cost of attorney fees and court costs.

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Denny said Ryabchuk filed the lawsuit to not only recover monetary losses but to "show Mayo it is not OK to treat its employees this way."

Ryabchuk was allegedly assaulted by a male supervisor on Oct. 2, 2020. She reported the incident to Rochester police and her manager on Oct. 30, 2020. The supervisor was put on administrative leave pending an investigation and returned to work on Dec. 16, 2020, according to the lawsuit.

Redacted Rochester Police Department incident reports included allegations that the alleged assailant called Ryabchuk about a week after the assault and "threatened to destroy her" and that he would "get a restraining order against her."

Ryabchuk was put on administrative leave on Nov. 18, 2020. On Dec. 30, 2020, Ryabchuk was told she was being terminated for various reasons, including "failure to be forthcoming during an investigation, including by providing false statements or omission of facts," the lawsuit states. Ryabchuk's termination letter, provided through her attorney for this story, lists five reasons for her termination, including "failure to abide by Mayo Clinic's Integrity and Compliance Program."

The Rochester Police Department incident report notes that the investigation into the alleged assault is open/inactive "per the victim's request," the incident report reads. The suspect's name was redacted from the documents.

A Mayo Clinic spokesperson confirmed that the person is still employed by Mayo Clinic.

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The lawsuit states that the clinic found the allegations that she was raped by a supervisor "were made in bad faith" by Ryabchuk based upon multiple interviews and contradicting information.

"Mayo Clinic denies Ms. Ryabchuk's allegations and will defend itself vigorously in court," Mayo Clinic spokeswoman Ginger Plumbo wrote in a statement.

Plumbo said Mayo investigates reports of misconduct promptly and if a report is found to have merit, corrective action to hold the accused accountable is taken.

"In this instance, the evidence did not support Ms. Ryabchuk's claim," Plumbo wrote. "Ms. Ryabchuk's termination was in no way retaliatory."

Mayo said it terminated Ryabchuk's employment "in accordance with Mayo Clinic's workplace policies and the law, and following a thorough internal investigation."

A timeline for the civil case filed with the court says the case will be ready for trial by August 2022.

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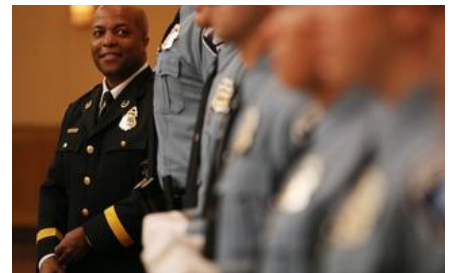
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