

FIRED OVER BREAST PUMPING



A court hearing recently took place due to a woman who claims to have been fired for sexual discrimination. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed the complaint for the woman, Donnicia Venters, against the company she was working for, Houston Funding. The 30 year old woman claims that the company she worked for violated her civil rights because they were discriminating against her for breast pumping. The Civil Rights Act, Title VII, clearly states that employers absolutely cannot, by any means, discriminate against an employee due to pregnancy, having children, or a condition that has to do with being pregnant or giving birth. However, the judge for the case, Judge Lynn Hughes, ruled in favor of Houston Funding instead of in the favor of Donnicia Venters. Judge Lynn Hughes believed that the actual claim featured within the lawsuit, which stated that Donnicia Venters wanted to use the bathroom to breast pump, was not part of the Title VII and ruled in favor Houston Funding instead. Judge Hughes also added a comment, stating that just because a company fires someone due to lactating or breast-pumping does not mean they are being sexually discriminative. Donnicia Venters was appalled and literally shocked by Judge Lynn Hughes decision to rule in favor of Houston Funding. She is hoping that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will appeal the ruling as a means of fighting back and having justice served for once and for all. Donnicia Venters says that she hopes that other employers will be more acceptable about breast pumping. She thinks it is a natural and great thing to do, to feed a baby natural breast milk, and that employers should be more accepting of what mothers have to do for their children, especially when it comes down to breast pumping. After hearing the ruling, a law professor at the Center for Work Life Law for the University of California, Joan Williams, says that the ruling made absolutely no sense. Williams says that lactation is, in fact, a medical condition that relates to pregnancy as well as childbirth, which is why it would relate to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Williams stated the obvious, saying that everyone with common sense knows that breastfeeding relates to childbirth. Williams also pointed out that all pediatricians recommend breastfeeding for babies. And, if the mother is nursing and is unable to pump at a certain period of time each day, she is at a higher risk of an extremely painful breast infection, mastitis. In the lawsuit, Donnicia Venters says that after being out on maternity leave and having her daughter, she called the president of her company to schedule a time in which she would come back to work. She says that the president was nice at the beginning of the conversation, until she asked about breast pumping. That is when the president of Houston Funding told her that her position was filled and that her services would no longer be needed.