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Manhattan Judge Rules Against Motherhood Class Action Employment Discrimination Lawsuit Against Bloomberg L.P. is Tossed

New York – Judge Loretta A. Preska of U.S. District Court in Manhattan rejected the class action lawsuit brought against Bloomberg L.P. for discrimination against its pregnant employees. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filed the case in 2007, claiming that the company systematically engaged in a pattern of discrimination, including demotions and pay cuts, against pregnant women who took maternity leave.

Perhaps even more surprising than the outcome of the case itself is the Judge's unabashed criticism—and outright hostility—toward creating equitable workplaces for working families. In her decision, Judge Preska said that, "The law does not require companies to ignore or stop valuing ultimate dedication, however unhealthy that may be for family life." Quoting business leader Jack Welch, she goes on to insinuate that U.S. employers have no obligation to their employees to "ignore" individual's decisions to have children when making pay and promotion decisions.

NOW-NYC Executive Director Sonia Ossorio says, "This ruling shows a fundamental lack of understanding of how discrimination against women with kids plays out in American business. Judge Preska hardly hides her contempt for mothers who want top-paying jobs. Her words are a rubber stamp for discrimination." Last year alone, the EEOC received over 6,000 complaints of pregnancy discrimination. Although firing an individual for being pregnant is illegal, doing so remains one of corporate America's dirty little secrets. Many women choose to avoid legal battles for fear of endangering future job prospects or because of the time and costs associated with pursuing a case.

The anti-family landscape is changing, however. *Working Mother* magazine puts out an annual list of best companies for working women, and there is an increased awareness developing among employers that making a long-term investment in employees by understanding family demands creates a stronger, more diverse, and more motivated workforce. In contrast, companies that don't care about American families will continue to lose top talent. Ossorio says, "Companies that foster an anti-woman culture like the one demonstrated at Bloomberg L.P. don't deserve its industry's top female talent. Ambitious women with working uteruses should now know that companies like this aren't worth their time."

The National Organization for Women is the nation's largest organization working to advance women's rights and improve women's lives. The New York City Chapter of NOW, founded in 1966, is the largest chapter in the country with 5,000 members locally and 35,000 statewide. NOW-NYC works to promote women's reproductive rights, secure women's economic empowerment, and end violence and discrimination against women.

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