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Discrimination and Pregnancy – Employers Beware

Employers who think they can dismiss female employees who are pregnant on technicalities may find that it will cost them thousands of dollars, maybe even jeopardising their businesses and reputations states the National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ).

The two recent cases of wrongful dismissal of pregnant employees highlights that there is still discrimination when it comes to women in employment and pregnancy says NCWNZ.

“The law is very clear in New Zealand when comes to this kind of discrimination in the workplace.” says NCWNZ National President, Elizabeth Bang. “Dismissing a female employee because she is pregnant is unlawful and employers need to realise it will cost them more in the long run.”

NCWNZ feel that is vital that the commitment that the New Zealand Government signed up to with the UN’s Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Woman (CEDAW) be constantly monitored.

NCWNZ feels some of the more crucial rights that women should be aware of are:

- The Human Rights Act 1993, which forbids sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, at work, school, or as a customer or client.
- Parental Leave and the Employment Protection Act 1987, gives you up to 52 weeks unpaid time off from your job after you, have a baby.
- Equal Pay Act 1972, which says that women can’t be paid less than men for the same job.

“It is essential that all New Zealand women know their rights when it comes to discrimination in the workplace and the remedies that are available to them if they feel they are being treated unfairly because of their gender and personal circumstances”, concluded Mrs Bang.

ENDS

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