



the work and family legal center

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INTERVIEWS: Officer Trischler, Officer Riley, and attorneys from A Better Balance are available by request.

Pregnant Police Officers Endure Discrimination in Kentucky; Win Landmark Case

City of Florence Must Update Its Disability and Pregnancy Policies while Compensating Police Officers



Officer Trischler with her daughter



Officer Riley (left) with her wife and son

Florence, KY— An agreement in a landmark pregnancy discrimination case announced today between the United States Department of Justice and the City of Florence, Kentucky means that two police officers who faced discrimination due to an illegal policy will be compensated. The City of Florence will pay a total of \$135,000 as part of the agreement and will overhaul its accommodation policy to conform with federal law to ensure that future pregnant workers have access to reasonable accommodations.

“We couldn’t be more proud of the bravery of Officers Trischler and Riley. Now the City of Florence will strike its discriminatory restrictions policy and ensure that pregnant workers have equal access to light duty and other basic accommodations under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act. No longer will pregnant officers in Florence be forced to choose between their paycheck and a healthy pregnancy. In light of this consent decree, municipalities and employers across the country should take a hard look at their policies to ensure pregnant workers are fully protected from discrimination and not penalized for starting a family,” said Dina Bakst, Co-Founder & Co-President of ABB.



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In July 2014, ABB filed a charge with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against the city of Florence on behalf of Officer Trischler charging a pattern and practice of discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and disability. Officer Trischler was forced out of her job with the Florence Police Department and onto a leave of absence in July 2014 after, based on her doctor's advice, she asked for modified duty for her complicated pregnancy.

City policy provided light duty for employees, but only those with on-the-job injuries were eligible to apply. ABB had previously [sent a letter](#) explaining legal concerns with this policy and calling for reform. Officer Riley was denied light duty around the same time as Officer Trischler and forced to work the streets even though her heavy gun belt and other gear caused great pain during the later stages of her pregnancy.

Because of a rare genetic disorder, Officer Trischler gave birth to a baby boy who survived only a few hours. Eight weeks after her son passed away, Officer Trischler returned to the force and continues to work for the police department at this time.

“This has been a long and difficult process for me, but I am gratified to see that the City will have to change its ways so that what happened to me never happens to anyone else,” Officer Trischler said. “No officer – in Florence or anywhere in the country – should have to endure the stress and pain I endured simply for getting pregnant.”

The Florence Police Department has more than 60 officers on the force, but currently only three female officers, including Officers Trischler and Riley. Officers Trischler and Riley are also represented by the prominent employment law firm, Outten & Golden LLP.

According to the agreement, which is pending court approval, the City of Florence will do the following, among other actions:

- Provide a \$135,000 award to Ms. Trischler and Ms. Riley for compensatory damages and attorneys' fees;
- Adopt a reasonable accommodation policy for workers with disabilities, including pregnancy-related disabilities, specifying that light duty can be a reasonable accommodation;
- Adopt an accommodation policy ensuring that pregnant employees have equal access to the same accommodations as workers with disabilities, on-the-job injuries, and others;
- Restore paid leave to Officers Trischler and Riley; and
- Provide adequate training to all City employees who are responsible for employee accommodation requests.

“It feels great to be compensated for our losses,” Officer Riley said. “And this came right in the nick of time—we’re currently expecting our second child.”

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