
EEOC Sues Estée Lauder Over Parental Leave Benefits

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The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) filed suit in federal court on Wednesday, August 30, 2017, against cosmetics giant Estée Lauder Companies, Inc. for sex discrimination in its parental leave policies. The EEOC alleges that the company provides women six weeks of paid leave for “child bonding,” in addition to paid leave for childbirth recovery, while providing men only two weeks of “child bonding” leave. Estée Lauder also allegedly provided new mothers with return-to-work benefits not similarly provided to new fathers.

The EEOC claims these practices constitute sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. The lawsuit seeks back pay and compensatory and punitive damages on behalf of male employees denied equal parental leave benefits because of their sex.

According to the Estée Lauder website, 84% of its worldwide workforce is female. “It is wonderful when employers provide paid parental leave and flexible work arrangements, but federal law requires equal pay, including benefits, for equal work, and that applies to men as well as women,” said EEOC Washington Field Office Acting Director Mindy Weinstein.

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