

## **Google Sued in Class Action Alleging Sex Discrimination**

Complaint Charges Google with Multiple Pay and Promotion Violations, Illegal Occupational Segregation of Female Employees

San Francisco, California (September 14, 2017) – Attorneys James M. Finberg of Altshuler Berzon LLP and Kelly M. Dermody of Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP, announce that a lawsuit filed today in San Francisco Superior Court alleges that Google has engaged in systemic and pervasive pay and promotion discrimination against its female employees in California.

The lawsuit, *Ellis v. Google Inc.*, Case No. CGC-17-561299 (San Francisco Superior Court), filed by Kelly Ellis, Holly Pease, and Kelli Wisuri, accuses Google of paying women at all levels less than comparable men, assigning women to lower tiers and/or job ladders with lower compensation and/or upward mobility than those to which similar men are assigned, and promoting women slower and less frequently than their male counterparts. Plaintiffs allege that Google has long known of these issues but has failed to correct them, causing substantial damage to its female workforce.

Google is a corporation that develops and sells Internet-related services and products. Google employs over 21,000 employees at its Mountain View office and has employees at six other office locations throughout California, including in San Francisco. In 2016, Google generated \$89.5 billion dollars in net revenue and \$27.89 billion dollars in operating income.

The plaintiffs allege violations of numerous California laws, including the Equal Pay Act, other provisions of the California Labor Code, and the Unlawful and Unfair Practices Act. The plaintiff class is represented by Altshuler Berzon LLP and Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP. Plaintiffs seek a jury trial.

According to the complaint, “Throughout the Class Period and throughout California, Google has discriminated and continues to discriminate against its female employees by paying female employees less than male employees with similar skills, experience, and duties; by assigning and keeping women in job ladders and levels with lower compensation ceilings and advancement opportunities than those to which men with similar skills, experience, and duties are assigned and kept; and by promoting fewer women and promoting women more slowly than it has promoted similarly-qualified men. The net result of this systemic discrimination is that Google pays women less than men for comparable work.” (Complaint, Paragraph 3.)

Plaintiff Kelly Ellis said, “I have come forward to correct a pervasive problem of gender bias at Google. It is time to stop ignoring these issues in tech.”

“Women should have the same opportunities as men, and receive equal pay for substantially similar work,” added Plaintiff Kelli Wisuri.

“Google’s motto is to do no harm, but it has harmed its women employees by not treating them as well as its male employees. It is time for that to stop,” said plaintiff’s attorney James M. Finberg of Altshuler Berzon LLP of San Francisco, California.

“While Google has been an industry-leading tech innovator, its treatment of female employees has not entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This case seeks to ensure fairness for women at Google,” said plaintiff’s attorney Kelly M. Dermody of Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP of San Francisco, California.

Attorneys James M. Finberg, Eve H. Cervantez, and Corinne Johnson of Altshuler Berzon LLP and Kelly M. Dermody, Anne B. Shaver, and Michelle A. Lamy of Lieff Cabraser Heimann and Bernstein LLP represent the plaintiffs. The case is *Ellis v. Google Inc.*, Case No. CGC-17-561299 (San Francisco Superior Court).

People interested in the lawsuit may provide information by visiting [www.googlegendercase.com](http://www.googlegendercase.com) or by calling 1-800-971-8881 to leave a message for plaintiffs’ counsel. A copy of the complaint and this press release are available on the website.

#### **Press Contacts:**

Jim Finberg (Altshuler Berzon): 415-421-7151

Kelly Dermody/Anne Shaver (Lieff Cabraser): 415-956-1000

#### **About the Plaintiffs**

Plaintiff Kelly Ellis was employed by Google as a Software Engineer at Google’s Mountain View office from approximately May 2010 to approximately July 2014. Ms. Ellis graduated from the University of Virginia in 2006 with a bachelor’s degree in applied mathematics and a minor in computer science. At the time of her hiring, she had four years’ experience working in software engineering.

Plaintiff Holly Pease was employed by Google as a Manager, Corporate Network Engineering; Manager, Business Systems Integration; Manager, Corporate Data Warehouse/Reporting Team; and Senior Manager, Business Systems Integration, at Google’s Mountain View office and, for her final year, at Google’s Sunnyvale office, from approximately August 2005 to approximately February 2016. At the time of her hiring, she had over 10 years’ experience working as a network engineer, Director of Network Engineering, and Vice President of Network Engineering.

Plaintiff Kelli Wisuri was employed by Google as a Sales Communications Specialist and Google Brand Evangelist, Executive Communications Program, at Google's Mountain View office from approximately October 2012 to approximately January 2015.

#### **About the Law Firms:**

Plaintiffs are represented by two law firms: the plaintiffs' labor and employment firm Altshuler Berzon LLP and the national class action firm Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP.

**Altshuler Berzon LLP** is a 26-attorney firm that specializes in representing workers in class and collective actions and other high impact cases for workers. Representative cases include *Satchell v. FedEx Express* (race discrimination case resulting in comprehensive injunctive relief, plus \$55 million in monetary relief); *Rosenburg v. IBM* (\$65 million settlement in tech worker wage case); and *Common Cause v. Coffman* (voting rights of 40,000 purged voters reinstated.) More information about the firm can be found at [www.altshulerberzon.com](http://www.altshulerberzon.com).

**Lieff, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP**, is a 70-attorney firm with offices in San Francisco, New York, Nashville, and Seattle. Lieff Cabraser has represented plaintiffs in a wide variety of class action litigation, including employment discrimination and civil rights. It has represented many plaintiffs in litigation against technology companies, including serving as lead class counsel in the Silicon Valley no-poaching case, *In re High-Tech Employee Antitrust Litigation*, which resulted in settlements totaling \$435 million, and in the on-going gender discrimination class actions for technical professionals at Microsoft (*Moussouris v. Microsoft Corp.*) and Sandia (*Kennicott v. Sandia Corp.*). The LCHB team also serves as co-lead class counsel in two additional pending gender class actions, against Goldman Sachs (*Chen-Oster v. Goldman Sachs*) and KPMG (*Kassman v. KPMG*). More information on the firm can be found at [www.lieffcabraser.com](http://www.lieffcabraser.com).