

For Immediate Release

Former Spokesperson for Alameda County District Attorney, Pamela Price, Files Lawsuit Alleging Retaliation for Whistle-Blowing

June 12, 2024. Oakland, CA – Today, Roxborough, Pomerance, Nye & Adreani, LLP filed a lawsuit against Alameda County on behalf of Patti Lee. Lee served as the Public Information Officer for Alameda County District Attorney, Pamela Price last year. The lawsuit alleges retaliation, discrimination, wrongful termination, and failure to pay wages.

Patti Lee's termination followed her thoughtful efforts to point out what she believed were illegal practices within the Alameda County District Attorney's office, specifically regarding violations of the California Public Records Act (CPRA). Amongst other things, Ms. Lee was tasked with responding to CPRA requests filed by journalists during the first week of December 2023 after an incident involving Berkeley Scanner founder, Emilie Raguso, who was barred from attending a press conference by DA Price. In the process, Ms. Lee subsequently discovered that the DA's office was hiding, deleting, and/or altering records rather than producing them. Days after she raised these legitimate concerns she was unceremoniously fired.

"I had to speak out," said Patti Lee. "I have been a serious and dedicated journalist for more than two decades. I believe in transparency and the public's right to know. This case is about more than just one individual; it's about maintaining the integrity and transparency of our public Institutions.

Lee's attorney, Nicholas Roxborough of Roxborough, Pomerance, Nye & Adreani explained the decision to pursue formal legal action. "Pamela Price, the top cop at the DA's office is attempting to silence her own people for refusing to participate in a cover-up. Growing up and going to school in the Bay Area, I find it shocking that a public official such as Ms. Price would engage in the kind of conduct that we believe to have occurred. That Ms. Price often spends more time worrying about her appearance and her image than fighting serious and complex crimes in the Bay Area is astounding. This lawsuit is just one of many legal and political proceedings calling into question Ms. Price's capacity to serve as the best representative for the great City of Oakland and Alameda County." Roxborough added: "We filed this lawsuit because there was ultimately no other recourse. After brief settlement discussions, it became clear that something is very amiss in Alameda County and Ms. Price's office.

The lawsuit also details allegations of anti-Asian discrimination within the DA's office. According to Lee, DA Pamela Price made derogatory comments about Asian Americans, stating that "the media and the Asians" were her enemies. "I have never been subjected to such humiliating and bullying behavior in a workplace. It is unacceptable in any professional environment but when the perpetrator is a public official who claims to be a civil rights advocate, it is unconscionable." Lee said.

Lee's termination notice provided no reason for her dismissal other than her status as an at-will employee and is contrary to Industry Best Practices in that Roxborough and Lee have been advised that there is no written record in Ms. Lee's personnel file supporting her termination. Additionally, she was never compensated for her first three weeks of remote work, despite her exemplary performance and dedication to the role.

"We are prepared to fight for justice and take on a District Attorney who has abused and apparently continues to abuse her authority," said Roxborough. "We are committed to holding the Alameda County District Attorney accountable for wrongful actions and uphold the integrity of the DA's office."

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