



---

Portfolio Media. Inc. | 111 West 19th Street, 5th floor | New York, NY 10011 | www.law360.com  
Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

---

# Delta Fired Worker For Reporting Race Bias, Suit Says

By Kelcey Caulder

Law360 (November 20, 2024, 4:43 PM EST) -- Delta Air Lines Inc. was sued Tuesday in Georgia federal court by a former Black employee who said he was given a verbal warning and then fired for reporting racial discrimination he and other Black workers faced in the workplace.

Alex Barr, who worked for Delta as a student and early careers recruiter, alleged in a **lawsuit** that he and other Black employees were often assigned "larger and more complex projects and tasks" than their co-workers, were disciplined more severely for mistakes and paid less than peers with their same job titles.

Barr said he first noticed the pay discrepancy in November 2022, when it came to his attention that, unlike those who shared his job title and were categorized as "grade 8" payscale employees, he was categorized as a "grade 7" payscale employee. He asked his supervisors about the pay disparity at that time, and although he was assured they would advocate for a reclassification of his position, he said that did not happen.

Barr claimed he followed up multiple times about his reclassification request over the following months but no action was taken. Instead, he said the company began to avoid one-on-one meetings about the issue and subjected him to "even heavier workloads that consisted of last-minute tasks with unreasonable expectations."

Eventually, after several more months of inquiry, Barr said he was told in June 2023 that his position would remain classified as "grade 7" and that he should shift his focus to supporting the company's general manager of talent acquisition.

"This resulted in plaintiff reporting to and managing tasks for three separate managers simultaneously, further burdening him and exceeding the scope of his role," Barr said in the suit. "Plaintiff's peers in the lead [student and early careers] recruiter positions were not similarly assigned to manage tasks for three or more managers."

In early August 2023, Barr said he inquired about a formal grievance process related to the pay disparity and was encouraged to escalate his concerns. However, about a week later, he said he was issued a verbal warning for purportedly using a "disrespectful tone" in email communications.

Viewing the warning as retaliatory, Barr reported it to human resources and filed a formal complaint alleging unfair treatment, discrimination, discriminatory pay, harassment and retaliation. He also requested an independent investigation and a meeting with Delta's managing director of global talent acquisition, but that meeting request went ignored, according to the suit.

After that, Barr said he was excluded from team meetings, denied professional development opportunities and had his personal time off requests rejected without "valid justification." Then, in September 2023, Delta fired him.

The company claimed Barr was let go because of "job elimination." However, Barr said "no other employee was terminated as a result of this job elimination" and Delta has thus far provided no evidence explaining what group of employees were considered for layoff, who the decision-makers were or what criteria were used to determine who should be laid off.

"Defendant treated plaintiff less favorably than similarly situated employees outside of his protected class by maintaining pay disparities between plaintiff (African-American) and plaintiff's non-African American co-workers in the lead [student and early careers] recruiter position," Barr said. "Defendant has no legitimate business reasons for the adverse action against plaintiff."

Barr asked the court to award him actual, compensatory, liquidated and punitive damages, as well as attorney fees and costs. He also asked for injunctive relief prohibiting Delta from "further unlawful conduct."

Representatives for the parties did not respond immediately to requests for comment on Wednesday.

Barr is represented by Kirby G. Smith and Rachel B. Canfield of The Kirby G. Smith Law Firm LLC.

Counsel information for Delta was not immediately available.

The case is Alex Barr v. Delta Air Lines Inc., case number 1:24-cv-05313, in the U.S. District


Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

--Editing by Jay Jackson Jr.

*For a reprint of this article, please contact [reprints@law360.com](mailto:reprints@law360.com).*

© 2024, Portfolio Media, Inc.

### **Attached Documents**

 [Complaint](#)

### **Related Info**

[View Article on Law360](#)

[Add to Briefcase](#)

[Case Information](#)

[Law Firms](#)

[Companies](#)

[Government Agencies](#)

### **Discover More**

[Related Articles](#) >

[Editorial Contacts](#) 

[Rights/Reprints](#)

---

All Content © 2024, Portfolio Media, Inc.