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A former employee sues Planned Parenthood, alleging retaliation for speaking up about harassment.

Mary Duan **Oct 31, 2019**

The woman once responsible for cultivating donors and bringing in major cash contributions to the largest Planned Parenthood affiliate in the country has sued her former employer, alleging the organization mishandled a sexual harassment and assault claim brought by another employee, then fired her when she repeatedly expressed her concerns about it.

Elizabeth Winchester says she was fired in late 2018 from the job she held at Planned Parenthood Mar Monte after she twice complained to her supervisor and CEO Stacy Cross about how they were handling the harassment and assault complaint. In her suit, filed Oct. 10 in Monterey County Superior Court, Winchester says Planned Parenthood issued her a “final written warning for alleged professional misconduct” after her second complaint, which she made on Oct. 24, 2018, and that her subsequent firing was in retaliation.

Winchester also alleges Planned Parenthood Mar Monte violated state labor codes, requiring her to work extra hours without paying her overtime and failing to provide her both required rest breaks and required meal breaks. The suit also claims that upon her firing, Planned Parenthood failed to pay her all past due wages.

Winchester, a Seaside resident, held development positions at Mar Monte for nearly eight years, including director of development for the organization’s coast and Central Valley region, and then as regional major gifts officer. According to financial records filed for the fiscal year ending June 2018,

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte brought in \$23 million in grants, gifts and contributions that year, with a total revenue of \$103.8 million. Mar Monte serves 220,000 people a year in 30 health centers throughout mid-California and northern Nevada.

A Planned Parenthood spokesperson did not return a call requesting comment. Winchester's attorney at Fenton & Keller declined to comment.

The case will make a first appearance in court for a case management conference on Feb. 11, 2020.

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