

Boston police detective wins gender bias lawsuit

\$2 million verdict



Nicholas B. Carter



Lucia A. Passanisi

The plaintiff, a three-decade veteran of the Boston Police Department, steadily rose through the ranks from police cadet to lieutenant detective.

In 2016, she was promoted to a new position in the department's Family Justice Center, which included units focused on human trafficking and crimes against children.

According to the plaintiff, soon thereafter her career was derailed when a male supervisor engaged in a campaign to undermine her rise in the department. For over a year, the supervisor micromanaged her unit, undercut her authority with subordinates, and conducted a secret audit of her cases.

The plaintiff was not provided a private office like those given to male officers of the same rank, and instead was assigned to a cubicle with three subordinates.

After the plaintiff complained of gender discrimination by her supervisor, the Boston Police Department had her reassigned to a less desirable, non-investigative position at the Boston Police Academy, derailing a likely promotion to the department's command staff.

The defendants claimed the plaintiff was not treated differently than her male counterparts and that she expected preferential treatment because of political connections to

then-Mayor Martin J. Walsh. They also claimed that they had concerns about her work performance.

Following a three-week trial, the jury deliberated approximately three and a half hours and awarded \$2 million to the plaintiff for emotional distress; lost job promotion opportunities; and lost overtime, sick time and vacation time.

Action: Employment

Injuries alleged: Lost promotion; emotional distress; lost overtime, sick time and vacation

Case name: Gavin v. City of Boston, et al.

Court/case no.: U.S. District Court/No. 18-10819-LTS

Jury and/or judge: Jury/Judge Leo T. Sorokin

Amount: \$2 million

Date: Nov. 15, 2021

Attorneys: Nicholas B. Carter and Lucia A. Passanisi, of Todd & Weld, Boston (for the plaintiff)



Todd & Weld LLP