

Lawsuit accuses Google of bias against women in pay, promotions

[Daniel Wiessner](#)

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The Google logo is pictured atop an office building in Irvine, California, U.S. August 7, 2017.

REUTERS/Mike Blake

(Reuters) - Three female former employees of Alphabet Inc's ([GOOGL.O](#)) Google filed a lawsuit on Thursday accusing the tech company of discriminating against women in pay and promotions.

The proposed class action lawsuit, filed in California state court in San Francisco, comes as Google faces an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor into sex bias in pay practices.

The lawsuit appears to be the first to make class action sex bias claims against Google, but is only the latest instance of a major tech company being accused of discriminating against women.

The Department of Labor sued Oracle America Inc in January, claiming it paid white men more than women and minorities with similar jobs. Microsoft Corp ([MSFT.O](#)) and Twitter Inc ([TWTR.N](#)) are facing sex bias lawsuits, and Qualcomm Inc ([QCOM.O](#)) last year settled claims for \$19.5 million.

Meanwhile, Uber Technologies Inc in June said it would make a series of changes after a former engineer in a blog post accused the ride-hailing service of condoning rampant sexism.

The plaintiffs in Thursday's lawsuit are a former Google software engineer, a former communications specialist and a former manager who worked in various roles at the Mountain View, California-based company. They say Google pays women in California less than men who perform similar work, and assigns female workers jobs that are less likely to lead to promotions.

"While Google has been an industry-leading tech innovator, its treatment of female employees has not entered the 21st century," Kelly Dermody, a lawyer for the women, said in a statement.

Google spokeswoman Gina Scigliano denied the claims in a statement. She said employment decisions are made by hiring and promotion committees, and are vetted "to make sure there is no gender bias."

"If we ever see individual discrepancies or problems, we work to fix them, because Google has always sought to be a great employer, for every one of our employees," she said.

The plaintiffs say Google violated California laws requiring equal pay for similar work and prohibiting unfair and unlawful business practices. They are seeking to represent a class of women who worked at Google in California over the last four years.

The Labor Department investigation stems from a 2015 audit in which the department says it discovered sex-based wage gaps among Google workers.

The department last month appealed an administrative judge's July decision that rejected its request for contact information for more than 20,000 Google employees.

Reporting by Daniel Wiessner in Albany, New York; editing by Alexia Garamfalvi and Andrew Hay

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Google disables offensive ad keywords found by BuzzFeed

Reuters Staff

2 Min Read

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The Google app logo is seen on a smartphone in this picture illustration taken September 15, 2017. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration

(Reuters) - Alphabet Inc's Google said it had disabled a "majority" of the offensive keywords that BuzzFeed found could be used by advertisers to target people searching for racist and anti-Semitic topics.

Google, the world's biggest advertising platform, not only allowed advertisers to target searches such as "Why do Jews ruin everything" but also suggested the user to run ads next to searches such as "the evil jew" and "jewish control of banks", a campaign by BuzzFeed discovered. (bzfd.it/2x2HX4H)

The ads were visible when such keywords were searched for and Google's ad buying platform tracked the ad views, according to the internet media company's report based on the campaign.

Google disabled the keyword searches used in the campaign after BuzzFeed's inquiry, except an exact match for "blacks destroy everything", the report said.

"We've already turned off these suggestions and any ads that made it through, and will work harder to stop this from happening again," Google's senior vice president of ads Sridhar Ramaswamy said in an email.

The news comes a day after Facebook Inc said it was temporarily disabling the ability of advertisers to target based on people's self-reported education and job information after a report that those features allowed targeting based on anti-Semitic topics.

Reporting by Arjun Panchadar in Bengaluru; Editing by Arun Koyyur

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