

Apple hit by another NLRB charge for firing senior manager who complained of harassment

Kali Hays 10 hours ago



The National Labor Relations Board, the agency that enforces US labor laws, is pursuing Apple.

The company fired senior program manager Ashley Gjøvik after she alleged mistreatment at work.

NLRB probes all claims and issues a complaint if they're found to have basis, leading to a hearing.

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Apple is facing another charge from the National Labor Relations Board over its [firing](#) of a senior employee after she complained about how the company handled alleged internal issues.

[Ashley Gjøvik](#), a senior engineering program manager at Apple for six years, first filed claims of work retaliation with the NLRB in late August, setting off an investigation by the government agency. She said she experienced sexual harassment at work and that her complaint was revealed to the alleged harasser. Gjøvik has also said Apple retaliated against her for the NLRB complaint and for earlier raising concerns about the office she and others worked in, as it sits on a Superfund site.

Her usual work was taken away and replaced with "unfavorable" assignments, she said in initial NLRB paperwork. Her supervisory responsibilities were also taken and eventually she was forced into administrative leave.

Gjøvik was [fired](#) last week by Apple, a move the company told her was because she shared "proprietary" company information, which Gjøvik denies. On Thursday, the company was hit with a new NLRB charge for "termination as retaliation," according to a filing by the agency. Apple did not respond to a request for comment. But the company has assigned two partners from the law firm McDermott Will & Emery, both focused on union and labor disputes, to handle the case.

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"Apple can try to rule with an iron fist, but the company is nothing without its employees. They need us. The more we speak up, the more we join together, the more they will have to give, instead of take or threaten," Gjøvik said. "I hope my continued fight and the ongoing press coverage around these concerns will force them to do better. At the very least, I hope it inspires employees to still speak up."

The NLRB, the federal agency that enforces U.S. labor law, automatically investigates all claims it receives. If its investigation into Apple shows Gjøvik's claims have merit, it will issue a formal complaint against the company leading to a hearing if the issue is not settled beforehand.

Gjøvik has also filed a whistleblower complaint with the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration, as well as its state counterpart CalOSHA, given her complaint to Apple regarding the office being on a Superfund site. Last week, OSHA confirmed in an email that her claimed retaliation will be formally investigated.

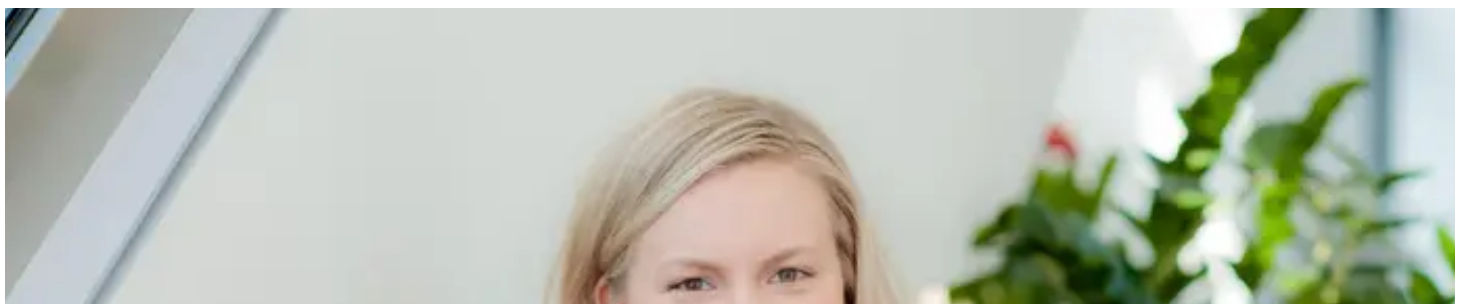




Photo courtesy of Ashley M. Gjøvik Ashley M. Gjøvik

Gjøvik has been public about her issues with Apple, posting to Twitter about her claims, Apple's alleged actions, and her subsequent firing. She told Gizmodo that the company asked last Thursday to speak with her about her complaints, which she agreed to do, but only by email so she would have a record of what was said. Apple replied saying Gjøvik had decided "not to participate in the discussion" and was fired shortly thereafter.

She is not the only Apple employee to have formally complained lately of Apple's conduct as an employer. Another NLRB charge was filed last week by Cher Scarlett, a software engineer. She claims the company interfered in and stopped conversations about pay between workers. Apple did recently shut down a [Slack](#) channel employees started to discuss the issue of pay equity. Employees' right to discuss pay is protected by U.S. law and [experts say](#) Apple is on unstable ground in its attempt to stop such conversations, even on a company channel.

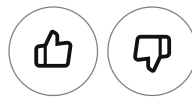
The hashtag #AppleToo has also gained traction in recent weeks, being used as a Twitter tag for stories by current and former Apple workers of alleged mistreatment, including sexism, racism, intimidation, and abuse. It has almost 4,000 followers and a stated goal of uniting the company's workers "to change Apple."

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