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NORTHWESTnews

RESTRICTED CLUB?

Trans woman files \$1 million lawsuit against Gresham gym

by Jim Radosta

Trans activist Lori Buckwalter filed a \$1 million lawsuit Jan. 28 against Cascade Athletic Club's Gresham location alleging gender identity discrimination. She says she was ordered to leave the facility if she could not "prove" she was a woman, was publicly harassed and harangued and was threatened with police intervention.

Buckwalter serves as executive director of It's Time, Oregon!, the statewide chapter of a nationally organized grassroots group seeking to secure and safeguard the rights of all trans people. She also was instrumental in the passage of Portland and Multnomah County civil rights ordinances banning bias based on gender identity in places of public accommodation.

Here are the details of the suit, as described in documents filed with the Multnomah County Circuit Court:

Buckwalter first visited the gym Nov. 26 after spotting a listing in a Health and Fitness Club Directory provided by her employer, Multnomah County, for which she serves as a diversity coordinator. In signing a 15-month contract, she provided an employee with her credit card information along with her Oregon driver's license, which establishes that she is female.

She soon received a note in the mail that welcomed her as a member. According to the lawsuit, for the next two and a half weeks she "visited the club numerous times...during which time she used the facilities, including the women's locker room, without incident."

All that changed Dec. 15, when she visited the club, which is located at 19201 S.E. Division St., on her lunch hour. As she exited the women's locker room to begin exercising, she says she was confronted by owners Mark and Frank Eisenzimmer near the front desk and in public view of several employees and customers who were arriving and leaving.

According to the lawsuit, one of the defendants said to Buckwalter in a loud voice, "You can't be out here like that." She maintains



Lori Buckwalter says she was ordered to leave Cascade Athletic Club if she could not "prove" she was a woman

that her attire was consistent with the club's dress code.

Buckwalter says Mark Eisenzimmer told her: "I think you are a man, and I don't want you using the women's locker room anymore. I want you out of this club."

When Buckwalter walked to the front desk, she says that the men repeatedly and loudly yelled, "Sir! Oh sir!" at her back and that Mark Eisenzimmer added, "If you don't leave this club immediately, I will call the police."

Anticipating a confrontation with law enforcement authorities, Buckwalter says she returned to the women's locker room to change her clothes. An employee then approached her and closely watched her continue to get dressed before escorting her to Mark Eisenzimmer's office.

"After leaving the dressing room, and on the way to Mark Eisenzimmer's office, Buckwalter attempted to stop at her car to obtain additional identification," the lawsuit states. "Mark

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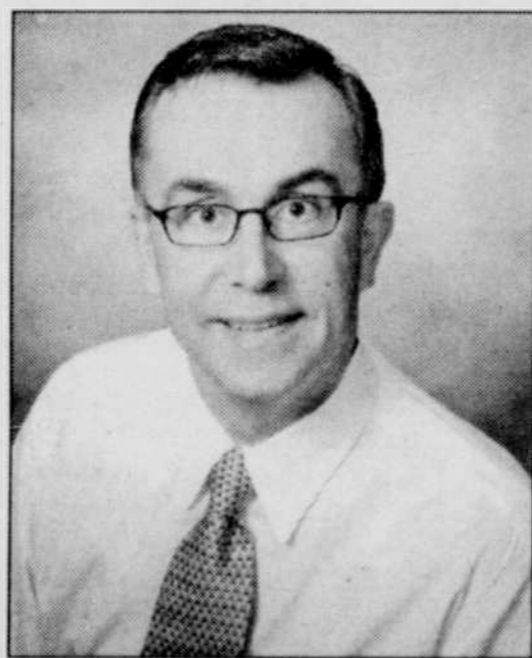
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