

Ex-J. Crew Lawyer Claims She Was Fired Over Hearing Loss

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By [Chris Dolmetsch](#)

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A former corporate lawyer for J. Crew Group Inc. who led the clothing company through its bankruptcy says she was humiliated and fired after she developed hearing loss.

Maria DiLorenzo, who served as general counsel from 2015 until she was fired last month, sued J. Crew in federal court in Manhattan on Thursday, alleging she was marginalized after being diagnosed with a medical condition in June 2020 that rendered her deaf in one ear and caused vertigo.

DiLorenzo accused the company of forcing her to work during her medical leave after she had cochlear implant surgery and refused her requests for accommodations that would allow her to continue doing her job. When she traveled to New York in July to attend a board meeting, the lawsuit filed by Wigdor LLP alleges, they isolated her so she could not hear what was happening and then fired her after she complained about her treatment.

“J. Crew Group is committed to fostering an equitable, safe and inclusive workplace,” the company said in a statement. “We believe these allegations are without merit and we will defend ourselves vigorously.”

In her lawsuit, DiLorenzo dismissed what she called “hollow market-speak” by the company, including Chief Executive Officer Libby Wadle, about its commitment to “fair and decent working conditions, the freedom of opinion and expression and an accessible and inclusive environment for everyone.”

“In fact, J. Crew cares little about the plight of its employees, especially those with disabilities,” DiLorenzo said.

J. Crew in August 2020 won court approval of a plan that allowed it to continue operating by getting rid of debt and handing control of the business to lenders. The purveyor of preppy fashion filed for bankruptcy in Virginia in early May 2020, becoming

the first major retailer to do so during pandemic-related shutdowns, though its problems pre-date Covid-19.

The case is DiLorenzo v J. Crew Group LLC, 21-cv-10768, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York.