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**WHEELING** — The former public relations director at Mountaineer Casino, Racetrack & Resort has filed a wrongful dismissal suit, alleging she was terminated just three days after she complained of gender-based discrimination on the part of the casino's president/general manager.

The suit, filed Oct. 21 in

Hancock County Circuit Court, alleges Tamara Pettit was near tears and physically sickened when Jack Sours, the casino's president and general manager, publicly chastised her during West Virginia Derby Day festivities in August.

The lawsuit alleges Pettit, who had been employed at the racetrack since 1998, was chastised in full view of patrons and other employees. Pettit contends Sours "did not publicly berate male supervisors" in the same manner.

When Pettit returned to work the Monday following the Derby, the lawsuit states she verbally asked Mountaineer Human Resources Director Vince Azzarello to investigate Sours' behavior. She said she renewed her concerns about Sours treatment the following day via an e-mail to Azzarello. In that e-mail she described Sours' alleged treatment of her as "humiliating and intimidating."

The lawsuit alleges Pettit was called to a meeting with Azzarello and Sours three days later and was told she was being discharged. In the suit, Pettit said when she asked if she was being terminated because she'd complained of gender-based discrimination by Sours, a male supervisor, Azzarello "put his head down and didn't respond, whereupon (Sours) immediately said... 'your position is being eliminated.'"

Pettit alleges her firing was an act of reprisal for her complaint of gender-based discrimination, and thus in violation of West Virginia Human Rights laws. She's seeking unspecified punitive and compensatory damages, as well as all costs related to the litigation.

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A spokeswoman for Mountaineer declined to comment on the lawsuit.

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