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**NEW LAWSUIT HIGHLIGHTS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MOTHERS**

**Stereotyping Workers Based on Family Responsibilities  
Is Form of Sex Discrimination**

SPOKANE, Washington – Legal Voice today announced it has filed a lawsuit on behalf of a woman who was fired after she returned to work from maternity leave and requested a flexible work schedule.

Norma Maxwell was a web designer at Virtual Education Software, Inc., in Spokane, Washington, until her employment was terminated last June. Although she was initially allowed to work some of her hours from home, after she had a child her flexible schedule was taken away because her employer did not think she could work at home with two children.

Legal Voice's Executive Director, Lisa M. Stone, stated that Ms. Maxwell's case demonstrates continued prejudice against working mothers. "Discrimination against workers who are pregnant or who have family responsibilities – whether they are caring for aging parents, children, or other loved ones – is just a type of gender stereotyping. Employers who make employment decisions based on stereotypical ideas of how employees should act, based on their family responsibilities, are engaging in sex discrimination."

When she was experiencing morning sickness, Ms. Maxwell's employer criticized her for having a bad attitude and told her all the other pregnant women he knew were "glowing." Then, he made her apologize to her co-workers and explain that she wasn't unhappy to be having a baby.

Ms. Maxwell stated, "Up until I had my second son, I worked part of my hours from home with no problem. But three days after I returned from maternity leave, I was fired. I was fully capable of performing my work – that didn't change just because I had another baby."

The case has been filed in Spokane County Superior Court. Legal Voice, founded in 1978 as the Northwest Women's Law Center, has been the vanguard organization bringing groundbreaking litigation and fighting for landmark legislation to ensure justice for women in the Pacific Northwest for more than 30 years. Kammi M. Smith of Winston & Cashatt is handling the case as a cooperating counsel for Legal Voice.

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*Women's rights. Nothing less.*

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