



# Two Former Prosecutors Sue County Prosecutor Over 2017 Firing



Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael O'Malley campaigning in 2016 for the prosecutor seat. [Elizabeth Miller / ideastream]

News

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A lawsuit filed by two former Cuyahoga County assistant prosecutors alleges discrimination as the reason behind their forced resignations.

When Cuyahoga County prosecutor Michael O'Malley discovered more than 70 unprosecuted sexual assault cases in the juvenile justice division last year, three people lost their jobs.

Laura Hoffman and Linda Herman - the two plaintiffs in the suit - say they were only responsible for six of those cases. Their supervisor, Robin Belcher, is the third lawyer who was forced to resign but isn't part of the lawsuit.

Hoffman and Herman's attorney, Peter Pattakos, said there were others in the prosecutor's office who had as much responsibility for those 70 cases but were not punished as severely. He said that makes another explanation more likely.

“Two of the three people they selected as scapegoats were a disabled woman and a 52-year-old, second-year attorney,” said Pattakos. “Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Herman were low-level, relatively inexperienced attorneys who barely handled any of the cases – 6 total – and could not have possibly been responsible for any such failure, especially not a widespread failure like this.”

The prosecutor’s office said in an e-mail response that the lawsuit is without merit and their resignations were offered after they were presented evidence of poor performance.

The lawsuit is filed in US District Court in Cleveland and seeks an unspecified amount of damages.