

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 6, 2017
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Today, the law firm of Teske, Micko, Katz, Kitzer & Rochel, PLLP, brought an employment discrimination class action lawsuit against the City of Minneapolis in Minnesota District Court in Hennepin County. According to the complaint, the City of Minneapolis maintains a return-to-work policy that fails to reasonably accommodate City workers who are disabled. In particular, it operates a “job bank” for injured employees in which they are automatically terminated after 120 days if they are unable to find employment since becoming disabled. The City program allegedly fails to provide any individualized assessment about an employee’s disability, including whether there are possible accommodations for the disability, in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

“Both state and federal law require all employers, including the City of Minneapolis, to make reasonable accommodations for employees who are disabled,” said Brian Rochel, partner at Teske Micko and lead counsel on the case. “The City’s one-size-fits-all policy of firing employees after a 120-day waiting period violates these laws, and fails to treat individuals on a case-by-case basis. Our claims are simply that the City must accommodate employees who are disabled on an as-needed basis.”

Laurence Stewart, the named plaintiff in the lawsuit, worked for Minneapolis as an auto mechanic from 2000 until his termination in 2013. Mr. Stewart became disabled in 2009, and was not able to return to his mechanic position without reasonable accommodation. He worked in several “light duty” positions that accommodated his disability, but the City ultimately refused to allow him to stay in those—or other modified positions—and instead forced him into the “job bank” program. The “job bank” policy allows employees to apply for open positions with the City for 120 days and, upon the expiration of the 120 days, employees are automatically fired if they were unable to find employment. Despite Mr. Stewart’s efforts, he was unable to secure a position with the City without any reasonable accommodation, and he was fired after 120 days in the “job bank.” According to the Complaint, many other employees, whom Mr. Stewart seeks to represent in this class action, have experienced similar discrimination because of their disabilities.

Teske Micko represents employees in class action and individual matters in Minnesota and throughout the country.

For more information, please contact Brian Rochel of Teske Micko Katz Kitzer & Rochel, PLLP, at (612) 746-155818, or www.teskemicko.com.