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Boulder Lesbian Quits Hospital Job Over Gay Pride Screen Saver

by Winnie McCroy
EDGE Editor
Friday Jan 6, 2017

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A former registered dietitian at Boulder Community Hospital in Colorado, said she was told to remove a rainbow flag screen saver from her computer or she would be fired. So she quit instead.

Denver7 ABC News [reports](#) that Michelle Hurn, a lesbian, was using the screen saver after the presidential election to show her support for the LGBTQ community.

"I'm going to put the flag up. It's a symbol to be of equality and, you know, of pride -- especially for people who are

marginalized," said Hurn.

But a complaint from a co-worker prompted a call from her boss insisting that the image be deleted or she would be fired, Hurn said.

"I'm certainly not looking for special treatment or preferential treatment, but to say that a symbol of equality is offensive -- I have a real problem with that and I just don't feel good working for an organization that's going to stand behind that," said Hurn.

Hurn told Denver 7 she spoke several times with hospital administrators, who each time refused to support her position. In a recent statement, Rob Vissers, president and CEO of Boulder Community Health, backpedaled on allegations of not being supportive of the LGBT community, saying, "BCH unequivocally supports the right of all employees to be part of a welcoming and safe workplace. We are proud to be a community owned and operated health system that reflects the deeply held values of tolerance and inclusiveness that define Boulder."

The statement goes on to say that Hurn was using a shared workplace computer, and said that the "employee who resigned was never threatened with termination by any member of the management team or Human Resources Department at BCH," but was instead offered the chance to have a mediation with her coworker.

Vissers' statement said that the gay pride flag was never on any list of offensive images banned at BCH, and that in fact there "is not and never has been such a list," saying only that "communications and images in shared workspaces be neutral. The purpose of this practice is to maintain a workplace that is focused on patient care. In this specific situation, the employee resigned rather than accept our content neutrality practice."

Nevertheless, [Towleroad](#) reports that hospital employees have launched a petition to have the hospital remove the rainbow flag from its "offensive images" list.

BCH countered that they were "proud of and deeply value the diversity and inclusiveness of our workforce, but this incident has made us realize we still have much work to do in order to provide the accepting

environment our employees and patients deserve and expect."

But Hurn maintains that she was threatened with termination, telling Denver7 that "I was very surprised that HR, my boss, the director of our department, they all told me they like me, they think I'm a good dietitian, they think I do great work, but if I'm going to put the symbol back up, then they're going to start the discipline process and that I was going to be fired."

Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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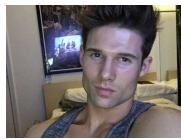
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