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\$160,000 Verdict for Man Wrongfully Terminated for Extending Medical Leave

After nearly two years of litigation, a jury awarded Richard Mooney \$160,000 in his FMLA violation claim against Roller Bearing Company of America (“RBC”) for lost wages after being wrongfully terminated in April 2020.

Mr. Mooney began working as a sales engineer for Roller Bearing Company of America in March 2018. He was 66 years old with over 30 years of industrial sales experience. Within the first year of his employment at Roller Bearing Company, his sales territory was unexpectedly doubled, and he had difficulty keeping up with the increased workload.

After much distress, Mr. Mooney visited a physician and was diagnosed with severe depression and received a doctor’s order to take time away from his job for his mental health. Mr. Mooney and his physician completed the Family and Medical Leave Act paperwork and submitted it to the Roller Bearing Company.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons. Eligible employees can take up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave in a twelve-month period without fear of losing their job.

The Roller Bearing Company approved Mr. Mooney’s FMLA request to take time off in early January 2020. On his doctor’s order, his leave was extended for another month. When his medical leave ended, Mr. Mooney contacted the company about returning to work.

On the day he returned to work at the Roller Bearing Company, Mr. Mooney was notified that he was terminated from his role.



Mr. Mooney contacted Patrick Kang of Premier Law Group and pursued an FMLA violation claim against Roller Bearing Company. Mr. Mooney alleged that Roller Bearing Company violated his state and federal Family and Medical Leave Act rights by terminating him because he extended his FMLA leave for his medical condition.

Roller Bearing Company denied that it let Mr. Mooney go because he extended his medical leave. When Mr. Mooney was terminated, RBC claimed the company was downsizing because of the potential financial impact of COVID-19.

The lawsuit culminated in a five-day jury trial conducted in Seattle, Washington. After deliberations, the jury in *Mooney v. Roller Bearing Company of America* ("RBC") returned a verdict in Richard Mooney's favor, awarding him \$160,000 for lost wages and finding that he was wrongfully terminated in violation of state and federal FMLA laws.

"It has been a privilege to represent Mr. Mooney and tell his story to the jury. We should all feel safe that employers will follow the law, and when they don't, it is my honor to help good people like Mr. Mooney get the justice they deserve," said Patrick Kang after hearing the jury's decision.