

# Dunlap Bennett & Ludwig Lawyers Score Win for Government Contractor Accused of Retaliatory Termination

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U.S. State Department contractor [Global Language Center](#) (GLC) was well within its rights to fire a worker who emailed unflattering “gossip” and “innuendo” about a State Department employee to three government officials in an attempt to thwart the woman’s promotion, a federal appeals court has held.

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*David J. Mitchell, Senior Vice President, Global Language Center*

“We knew from the beginning that the content of Ms. Johnson complaint was baseless,” said David J. Mitchell, GLC’s Senior Vice President. Mr. Mitchell went on to thank [Dunlap Bennett & Ludwig](#) for their highly professional and direct response to the former employee’s complaint.

GLC’s lawyers at Dunlap Bennett & Ludwig convinced the Richmond, Va.-based U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals

that the civil rights lawsuit brought by Leila Johnson was groundless, and that she was fired for unprofessional conduct – not, as Johnson alleged, for complaining about sexual harassment at her job with the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute (FSI).

“We are gratified that the 4th Circuit affirmed the lower court’s ruling for our client,” said GLC’s lead counsel [Thomas Dunlap](#), a partner and co-founder of DLB. “As the court said in its unanimous opinion, the federal civil rights laws were never intended ‘to immunize insubordinate, disruptive, or nonproductive behavior at work.’” And, by trashing the FSI employee she believed was up for promotion, in an email sent to the FSI decision-makers, Johnson could have soured GLC’s relationship with FSI and jeopardized GLC’s federal contracts.”

While complaints about sexual harassment are protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Johnson’s lengthy email to FSI officials made only “vague” and “sporadic” mentions of harassment and her fear of retaliation, “surrounded by what can only be called personal gossip” about the woman she believed was about to be promoted to supervisor, the Fourth Circuit’s opinion said.

“Johnson was not conveying information about Title VII violations; she was attempting to disrupt FSI’s rumored personnel decision,” and generally expressing her “personal opposition” to the State Department’s “methods for selecting supervisors,” the Fourth Circuit held.

The case is *Johnson v. Global Language Center*, 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals No. 21-1638.

#### About Global Language Center

Global Language Center (GLC) is a woman-owned small business (WOSB) providing a wide array of professional language services to the U.S.

Government and commercial clients worldwide.

Founded in 1996, GLC has grown because of its superb performance, care of employees, and in-depth language expertise. GLC offers customized language services to our clients’ organizational or individual needs, covering over 78 different languages and dialects. Its foreign language services include foreign language instruction, cultural awareness training, regional expertise, translation, interpretation, transcription, project management, and other professional support services. GLC has provided foreign language support services to the Department of State (DOS), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Defense (DoD), ENSE Group, and Children’s Hospital, among others. GLC also offers interpretation and translation services.



Thomas Dunlap

#### About Dunlap Bennett & Ludwig

Dunlap Bennett & Ludwig is a veteran-owned law firm with outcome-focused attorneys advising and representing clients in national and international legal matters. DBL prides themselves on prioritizing practical and effective outcomes by offering a full array of legal services and investing in long-term relationships with their clients. To learn more about Dunlap Bennett & Ludwig and how we assist you, contact us by calling 800-747-9354 or emailing [clientservices@dbllawyers.com](mailto:clientservices@dbllawyers.com).

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