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Former Georgia Lottery official files whistleblower lawsuit



By - Associated Press
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ATLANTA (AP) - A former official for the Georgia Lottery was fired after he refused to present inflated sales projections to the lottery board, he said in a whistleblower lawsuit filed this week.

Former lottery vice president for financial management Kenneth Knight says in the lawsuit filed in Fulton County Superior Court that he was pressured by his boss and lottery president and CEO Debbie Alford to give false sales projections to the board in April 2014, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports (<https://on-ajc.com/1byHqcT>). The lawsuit says Knight alerted his boss about problems with the numbers but that they were presented to the board anyway.



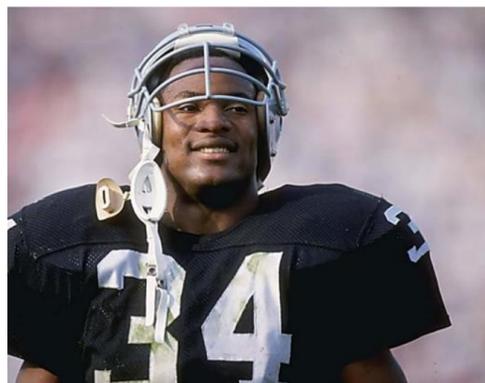
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A spokeswoman for the state attorney general's office, which represents state agencies when they're sued, declined to comment.

"The lawsuit is baseless and we look forward to defending the case in court," Georgia Lottery Corp. Senior Vice President and Legal Counsel Joseph Kim said in an emailed statement.

Knight's lawsuit says he was fired about a week after the board meeting "because of events that took place in March and April of 2014 during the budget process which resulted in misleading information being distributed to our CEO and board of directors." Knight was fired to hide the fact that Alford knew she was presenting the board with inflated numbers, which is both unethical and illegal, the lawsuit says.

Knight was fired because he failed to perform satisfactorily in the job he had been promoted to, Kim said.

Knight has hired lawyer Kim Worth, who also represented former ethics commission head Stacey Kalberman, who filed a successful whistleblower lawsuit that argued she was unfairly pushed out of her job for aggressively investigating ethics complaints against Gov. Nathan Deal. A jury awarded Kalberman more than \$1 million in damages and attorney fees.

The Journal-Constitution reports the state has settled at least four lawsuits against top officials in the past year. That includes settlements totaling about \$2 million for three other former ethics commission staffers.