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DETECTIVE ALLEGES RACE BIAS BY WALSH SUIT AGAINST CITY COMES ON TOP OF 2 SEX-BIAS CLAIMS

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A Lexington police homicide detective filed a lawsuit against the city yesterday, alleging that former Chief Larry Walsh racially discriminated against him.

The lawsuit comes days after Walsh retired as police chief and in the wake of two sexual discrimination lawsuits filed by two female former police officers this year. Last week, Walsh declined a promotion to public safety commissioner, citing the city's nepotism policy.

William E. Richmond Jr., who still works in the department, says in his lawsuit that Walsh is racially biased, as shown "by statements and actions." Walsh is not a defendant in the suit, though he is mentioned by name several times.

"Walsh knowingly condoned, tolerated and allowed discriminatory practices by (the) Division of Police that discriminated against Richmond based on his race," the lawsuit says.

Susan Straub, a spokeswoman for Mayor Pam Miller, said Miller would not comment on an active lawsuit. Walsh could not be reached for comment. Claims made in a lawsuit give only one side in a dispute.

The lawsuit does not give specific examples of the alleged racial bias. **Robert L. Abell**, an attorney representing Richmond and the women who filed the sexual discrimination lawsuits, declined to elaborate on Richmond's allegations or to say why the lawsuit was filed after Walsh resigned.

Abell said Richmond, who is black, has been a police officer for about 10 years. Walsh became chief in 1990. Richmond's suit asks for an unspecified amount of money.

"Richmond has suffered embarrassment and humiliation, emotional distress and mental anguish," the lawsuit says, adding that his civil rights were violated.

Meanwhile, the Urban County Government has responded to allegations contained in a sexual discrimination suit filed against Walsh and the city Aug. 1 by retired police officer Melinda J. Massarone. The city's response, filed Friday, asks that Massarone's suit be dismissed.

Massarone alleged that Walsh discriminated against her and other female employees and then retaliated when she opposed the discrimination.

In the response, Urban County attorneys "deny that Walsh intended any harm to come to Massarone

as a result of her promotion and assignment and further deny that Massarone's working conditions were intolerable or the result of any wrongful actions."

The response says that Walsh had limited responsibility for hiring and promotion practices, and that many decisions were controlled by the city's Human Resources division. City officials and Walsh tried to "prevent and promptly correct any discriminatory behavior," the response says.

The document cites Massarone's "unreasonable failure to take advantage" of opportunities offered to her by the city and Walsh to address her concerns, though it provides no specifics.

Walsh has said that the lawsuits had nothing to do with his stepping down from the public safety commissioner post. His daughter is a police officer, which city lawyers said would bar him from accepting the promotion under the city's nepotism policy.

The nepotism rules did not apply to supervisors whose relatives were employed by the same agency before 1994 unless the supervising employee changed positions.

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Staff writer Jefferson George contributed to this article.

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Larry Walsh is also named in sex bias law- suits by two ex-officers.

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