

Former exec sues Goldman Sachs after allegedly being fired for being "too gay"

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A former Goldman Sachs executive sued the bank for discrimination on Wednesday, saying he was fired after reporting repeated instances of homophobia and discrimination.

William Jarrad Littleton, a former vice president and eight-year employee of the bank, claims he was fired after complaining about multiple instances of what he described as discrimination because he is gay, according to the lawsuit filed in New York State Supreme Court.

In a statement to ABC News, Goldman Sachs officials described the lawsuit as "without merit."

In one example cited in the lawsuit, Littleton alleges that he was kept off a client call for because "he sounded too gay."

In another, he alleges that he was asked, "What's wrong with you? Do you act this way because you're gay?"

Littleton's lawsuit claims he was "abruptly fired by those who he complained engaged in discriminatory conduct," right after complaining to the employee relations department at Goldman, despite several prior years of what he characterized as excellent performance reviews. He also claims his annual compensation had dropped almost 20%, as other vice presidents out-earned him.

The ousted executive also said he was an openly gay leader at the bank.

"Mr. Littleton's experiences demonstrate that Goldman Sachs in particular has failed to embrace this important responsibility," David E. Gottlieb, a lawyer for Littleton said in a statement to ABC News. "We intend to send a message to all businesses in New York, and Goldman in particular, that this type of treatment towards LGBTQ+ employees will not be tolerated."

A Goldman Sachs spokesperson called the claims "baseless."

"Goldman Sachs has a sustained and proven commitment to diversity, and we are proud of the vibrant and diverse LGBTQ community at the firm," officials for the Wall Street firm wrote in a statement to ABC News.

"We strongly encourage all of our employees to bring their authentic selves to work, because it makes us a better firm. This suit is without merit and we plan to defend ourselves."