

Former Hamilton Cast Member Suni Reid Files Discrimination and Retaliation Complaint Against the Musical

P playbill.com/article/former-hamilton-cast-member-suni-reid-files-discrimination-and-retaliation-complaint-against-the-musical

Oct 13, 2021

Suni Reid, a former *Hamilton* ensemble member and understudy for several principal roles, has filed a legal complaint against the show, saying their contract for the current Los Angeles engagement was rescinded during negotiations after they requested a gender-neutral dressing room. Reid, who identifies as a Black non-binary, transgender individual, says they were subject to discrimination and retaliation by the production and members of the company.

Reid first joined the show as part of the Broadway company in fall 2017—prior to openly identifying as non-binary—and the complaint outlines instances of ridicule and harassment during that time. Such behavior escalated when they joined the Chicago company of the Tony-winning musical, including after they had publicly come out and changed their pronouns, according to the complaint. Episodes recounted include being physically threatened by one company member and misgendered by others.

During the shutdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Reid voiced a number of these incidents via Instagram as the theatre industry as a whole reckoned with a wave of similar accounts that brought to light systemic oppression and racism. The claim says that these posts were later used by the production “to rationalize suspending the renewal of Mx. Reid’s contract.”

Reid was already slated to appear in the Los Angeles bow prior to the pandemic. Even as performances had started post-hiatus in August 2021, Reid remained on the payroll but did not physically join the company as a contract had not been finalized. Reid had requested an inclusive, gender-neutral dressing space (covered by California law) as part of the terms of their return, but, according to the complaint, the production’s response was to curtain off part of a gendered dressing room. Ultimately, a gender-neutral space was created after Rory O’Malley, who plays King George, offered up his private room.

Still, Reid’s contract was not renewed, with the production informing Reid’s counsel on September 18 that they did not intend to have them perform with any company of the musical. “The only explanation is that Mx. Reid was punished for making legally protected complaints and requests to the company,” the complaint reads. “Though the Company did

what it needed in order to meet legal obligations and quell unrest among the cast, it would no longer tolerate or trust Mx. Reid as an employee who dared question the supposed ‘wokeness’ of the Company as a business.”

The production denies the discrimination and retaliation allegations, saying that Reid was offered a contract that addressed their requests. “We have treated Suni with the same respect and consideration as all the company members of *Hamilton*,” a spokesperson for the title said in a statement. “Specifically, we have given Suni direct financial support, paid for their health insurance, and paid for their housing.”

The complaint against *Hamilton*—and the show's touring and general management LLCs—was filed with Los Angeles' Equal Employment Opportunity Commission office by Wigdor LLP.