

Trans 'Hamilton' Actor Accuses LA Production of Retaliating After Requesting Gender-Neutral Dressing Room

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Brian Welk

A Black, trans and non-binary actor who has starred in “Hamilton” in both Chicago and Los Angeles has filed an EEOC complaint against the L.A. production of the show, saying their contract was not renewed after requesting a gender-neutral dressing room.

Actor Suni Reid, who has played roles including Aaron Burr, George Washington, Hercules Mulligan/James Madison and Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson and is openly transgender, said that they were repeatedly misgendered and physically threatened by other actors, specifically in the dressing rooms reserved for the male performers.

Reid adds in the complaint that they raised concerns about being mistreated several times, including in May and June amid discussions for a contract renewal for the Los Angeles production, which included a request that the production add a gender-neutral dressing room at the Pantages Theater. Their contract was not renewed starting in September.

Reid says in the complaint that they were told a part of the existing dressing room would be partitioned off with a sheet or curtain, and after Reid said this was inadequate, further negotiations were cut off. The complaint also says the production cited “problematic” social media posts as the reason for the delay, but Reid claims the company knew about these posts for months.

It also goes on to say that cast member Rory O’Malley, who plays King George in the Los Angeles “Hamilton” production, generously offered to give up his dressing room for Reid, but that Reid was still excluded and still rescinded their contract renewal offer.

A representative for “Hamilton” in Los Angeles did not respond to a request for comment.

Reid’s EEOC complaint even includes a poem set to the rhyming scheme of the opening number in “Hamilton,” “My Shot,” which you can read below:

“How does a Black-skinned, trans kid, child of divorce
From a public school, dropped in the middle of the Philly burbs
If not by providence, unpolished, under trauma
Grow up to sing in Broadway’s biggest drama?
The word got around, teacher told mom, ‘This kid is insane, ma’am.’
Put ‘em in some lessons just to get them on the stage, then
Got their education, took their talents straight to Pace, and

The world's yours to entertain, run the gameplan
Sunni Reid in Hamilton
Could not believe they made it to Hamilton”

“Publicly, Hamilton is a beacon of diversity and appears committed to causes seeking social justice and harmony,” Reid’s lawyers Lawrence M. Pearson and Lindsay M. Goldbrum said in a statement. “Behind the curtain, however, the Company’s management will force out a Black, transgender cast member simply because they stood up for themselves and advocated for a more equitable workplace, and therefore called that public image into question. We look forward to upholding Mx. Reid’s rights and hope this is a wake-up call for the theater industry about the systemic inequities that persist even at its greatest heights.”

Mx. Reid is represented by Wigdor LLP partner Lawrence M. Pearson and associate Lindsay M. Goldbrum.

Pamela Chelin contributed to this report.