

Former ‘Hamilton’ trans cast member says contract was not renewed over request for gender-neutral dressing room

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Muri Assunção

A former “Hamilton” transgender cast member filed a complaint Wednesday with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claiming their contract was not renewed after a request for a gender-neutral dressing room.

Suni Reid, a Black trans nonbinary individual who uses they/them pronouns, first joined the hit Broadway show in October 2017. They have taken part in the New York, Chicago and Los Angeles productions of “Hamilton,” [according to the complaint](#).

“Unfortunately, during Mx. Reid’s years with the show, which purports to be an icon of diversity, they have experienced frequent incidents of discrimination and harassment from cast members and management of Hamilton based upon their race, sexual orientation/LGBTQ+ status, gender, and gender identity,” the complaint reads.

While acknowledging that “the vast majority” of their colleagues are “wonderful,” Reid claims that the company “failed to act when certain actors physically threatened or intentionally and repeatedly mis-gendered Mx. Reid, who was open about being transgender/non-binary” — even after they brought their concerns to the company “several times.”

Much of the harassment Reid allegedly faced took place in dressing rooms used by male performers, they said.

Over the summer, during talks with management about the renewal of their contract, Reid claims that they asked production to set up a gender-neutral dressing room, “appropriate for their gender identity and required by law” at the Pantages Theater in Los Angeles.

The space would also be available to other members of the cast. According to the complaint, “multiple other actors [had] expressed interest in using a gender-neutral dressing room.”

However, instead of engaging in a “dialogue regarding this reasonable and easily anticipated request and proposal,” production told Reid that it “simply would cordon off part of the main dressing area using a curtain or sheet.”

After Reid responded that the proposed solution was unacceptable, management allegedly began retaliating against them.

A gender-neutral space was ultimately created after cast member Rory O'Malley, who plays King George, offered up his private dressing room.

But still, on Sept. 18, production informed Reid that “they no longer were open to having Mx. Reid perform in any Hamilton company or production, and renewal of their contract was no longer an option,” the complaint alleges.

Attorneys representing Reid hope that their story will serve as a “wake-up call for the theater industry” in terms of the ongoing inequities that persist at all levels.

“Publicly, Hamilton is a beacon of diversity and appears committed to causes seeking social justice and harmony. 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,” Lawrence Pearson and Lindsay Goldbrum of the New York law firm Wigdor LLP, told the Daily News in a statement.

“We look forward to upholding Mx. Reid’s rights,” they added.

A “Hamilton” spokesperson denies the allegations, saying in a statement that Reid was “a valued cast member for more than three years.”

“We have not discriminated or retaliated against Suni. Since the shutdown, our organization has taken care of our community. We have treated Suni with the same respect and consideration as all the company members of ‘Hamilton.’ Specifically, we have given Suni direct financial support, paid for their health insurance, and paid for their housing. We wish Suni well in their future endeavors,” the spokesperson added.