

State Rep. D.Wonda Johnson facing lawsuit

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Former campaign manager says he's owed \$26,000, plus

ALBUQUERQUE – A lawsuit related to a campaign management matter and filed in January 2016 hasn't yet been settled and it looks like there's no telling when there will be some closure on it, records suggest.

D. Wonda Johnson, the area state representative who is the subject of the suit, filed in the 2nd Judicial Court, offered no information April 18 as to when the matter would be disposed of.

Johnson, D-Church Rock, the incumbent candidate for a New Mexico District 5 House of Representative seat, reportedly owes her former campaign manager Keegan King, president of Atsaya, Inc., of Albuquerque, \$13,375, plus reimbursements as per a March 2014 consultation and managerial services agreement, according to the 12-page lawsuit.

King further states in the document that Johnson agreed to an additional campaign services payment of \$13,375 for the dates of July 1, 2014 to Nov. 1, 2014.

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King, who is originally from the Pueblo of Acoma, seeks unspecified damages, according to the suit.

Johnson deferred a telephone call on the matter this week to Daniel Marzec, communications director for the (New Mexico) House Democratic Campaign Committee.

Marzec said, "She (Rep. Johnson) considers it irresponsible to comment at this time on a pending lawsuit."

He did not provide further comment.

King states in the lawsuit that Johnson did not live up to an oral agreement. After she won the 2014 election, the lawsuit stipulates, Johnson paid just \$3,000 of the total amount due to King.

Specifically, the document, filed on behalf of King by attorney Renee Ashley of Albuquerque, alleges breach of contract, breach of an implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing, promissory estoppel, fraudulent misrepresentation, negligent misrepresentation, intentional infliction of emotional distress and violation of the Unfair Trade Practices Act.

Johnson beat former McKinley County Treasurer Charles Long for the District 5 House seat and then beat Sandra Jeff of Crownpoint, who ran in the general election as a write-in candidate.

This time around, Johnson faces Gallup-McKinley County School Board Vice President Kevin Mitchell in the June 7 primary.

Johnson did not list the services provided by King on her campaign finance reports as filed from April 14, 2014 to Oct. 13, 2015, according the information on file with the Secretary of State's Office.

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Johnson, a former administrator under Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and education coordinator with Gallup-McKinley County Schools, told the *Albuquerque Journal* in 2014 that she previously filed for bankruptcy.

Barry Massey, administrative office of the courts spokesman, said April 19 that a summons regarding the lawsuit remains unserved. "The case is pending and that there aren't any hearings scheduled on it," Massey said.

District 5 seat included McKinley and San Juan counties.

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