

## **Amended suit charges TripAdvisor with retaliation**

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The web content editors suing TripAdvisor LLC have amended their class-action complaint to charge the Newton-based travel website with retaliating by firing them after their lawsuit was filed.

Shannon Liss-Riordan, attorney for the editors, estimated today that hundreds of them were e-mailed by TripAdvisor this week and in January and told their services were no longer required. Many were later replaced by temporary workers, Liss-Riordan said.

The original complaint, filed last July, alleged that the company had misclassified the editors as independent contractors when they should have been classified as employees -- and entitled to employee benefits -- under Massachusetts law. The editors wrote articles for the site and edited user-generated reviews of hotels and restaurants.

A scheduling conference for the case has been set for May in US District Court in Boston.

The amended complaint said TripAdvisor terminated an unspecified number of web content editors this year, though it rehired some as employees. It seeks unspecified damages and a declaratory judgment from the court that the editors should have been employees.

TripAdvisor spokesman Brian Payea yesterday said his company's policy is not to comment on legal matters. The company has not said how many web content editors it used.

By firing the editors, Liss-Riordan said, the company was tacitly admitting they should have been classified as employees.

"This is an acknowledgement that they had wrongly classified these people as independent contractors," she said. "We disagree with the remedy. We think they should have been converted to employees."