

# Harvey Weinstein Accusers Urge NY Attorney General To Reject Civil Settlement

**D** [deadline.com/2020/03/harvey-weinstein-accusers-urge-new-york-attorney-general-to-reject-civil-settlement-](https://deadline.com/2020/03/harvey-weinstein-accusers-urge-new-york-attorney-general-to-reject-civil-settlement-)

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Seven women who say they survived sexual abuse by [Harvey Weinstein](#) are calling on New York Attorney General Letitia James to reject [a proposed multimillion-dollar settlement](#) with Harvey Weinstein and his former company, calling the terms “insulting” to all survivors and financially detrimental to accusers who choose not to take part in the agreement.

“The settlement is insulting to all of the survivors in that it represents a small fraction of what should be paid by Mr. Weinstein, his former directors and officers, and large multibillion-dollar insurance companies,” reads the letter signed by seven women. “Under the agreement, a large percentage of the settlement originally intended for victims will instead be paid to lawyers for Harvey Weinstein (a now-convicted felon), his brother Robert Weinstein and other ultra-wealthy former members of the board of directors of [the Weinstein Company](#), who turned a blind eye, allowing Harvey Weinstein to victimize us and so many others.”

Read the letter in full below.

The settlement has been on and off for more than a year. Attorney Thomas Giuffra, who is representing Alexandra Canosa — a signatory on today’s letter — said in December of the proposed deal, “The agreement is akin to the United States giving military aid to Iran so that it could attack Israel.”

Attorneys Douglas H. Wigdor and Kevin Mintzer, who represent all of the signers of the letter with the exception of Canosa and Zoe Brock, also released a statement Monday:

“We hope that the Attorney General, as the chief law enforcement officer of the state of New York, finds the courage to stand up to Harvey Weinstein and his associates that we believe enabled him so as to ensure a fair settlement that provides adequate compensation for those that want to settle their claims and an unencumbered path forward for those survivors that want their day in court.”

Weinstein was [found guilty in February](#) on two counts of rape in the third degree and criminal sexual acts in the first degree. He was acquitted on three other charges in the Manhattan trial.

Here is the letter in its entirety:

Dear New York Attorney General Letitia James,

We are survivors of sexual abuse by Harvey Weinstein. Some of us have lawsuits against him and his former companies. Each of us is committed to seeing that justice is achieved for all of his victims.

As you know, on February 25, 2020, a Manhattan jury found Harvey Weinstein guilty of criminal sexual act in the first degree and rape in the third degree in connection with the violent sexual assaults of Miriam Haley and Jessica Mann. Mr. Weinstein was found not guilty of being a sexual predator. But he is. Mr. Weinstein has sexually assaulted countless women and while the criminal prosecution has provided some form of justice for all of his victims, there is so much more that can be done. You, as the chief law enforcement officer of the State of New York, have the power to hold him and the people who enabled him accountable for their actions. The Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance took a risk when he and his assistants decided to prosecute their case, but that's what good law enforcement officials do. We expect no less of you. Respectfully, it is time to step up and come out of the shadows. Your voice needs to be heard.

#### IMPACT ON ALL SURVIVORS

We have been told that your office supports the proposed civil settlement of all Weinstein-related sexual harassment and sexual assault cases. We ask you to reconsider. The settlement is insulting to all of the survivors in that it represents a small fraction of what should be paid by Mr. Weinstein, his former directors and officers, and large multi-billion dollar insurance companies. Under the agreement, a large percentage of the settlement originally intended for victims will instead be paid to lawyers for Harvey Weinstein (a now-convicted felon), his brother Robert Weinstein and other ultra-wealthy former members of the board of directors of the Weinstein Company, who turned a blind eye, allowing Harvey Weinstein to victimize us and so many others.

We also understand that Harvey Weinstein, Robert Weinstein and the former board members of the Company will not be contributing any of their own funds towards the settlement. Taking money out of the victims' fund to pay for defense costs under these circumstances is downright offensive and we are genuinely shocked that you would permit this to happen. In addition, the lawyers leading the negotiations for some of the victims — class action attorneys who do not represent us — have apparently reached this "global settlement" with the defendants and insurance companies under which they will be paid millions, while victims will receive only a small fraction of what a settlement was initially expected to yield.

#### IMPACT ON THOSE WHO WANT TO CONTINUE WITH CIVIL LITIGATION

While every survivor should have the ability to make her own choice as to whether to settle despite these glaring deficiencies, the proposed settlement will have a profoundly negative impact on those who voluntarily choose not to settle. As we understand it, for those that

want to continue with the civil litigation, the proposed settlement will give the Weinstein Company's insurers general releases from all claims. As a result, even if a survivor obtains judgment against the Weinstein Company, the insurance company will no longer be on the hook. In other words, while survivors are nominally being afforded the right to reject the agreement and pursue their claims, the reality is that there will be nothing left for them to recover from the empty shell of the Weinstein Company or what they have been repeatedly told is the inevitable personal bankruptcy of Harvey Weinstein.

By supporting a settlement which takes funds that would otherwise go to a victim to a victimizer, the Attorney General's Office will effectively be working to recover funds on behalf of Harvey Weinstein to fill a war chest to be used for his ongoing campaign against his victims. This was certainly not the goal of the Attorney General's Office when it first rose to the defense of Mr. Weinstein's victims. While we understand you inherited this case, we would be shocked to learn that you would be less protective of survivors than your elected predecessor as Attorney General.

In sum, survivors are being presented with a "choice" of accepting an unfair settlement that is a fraction of what was originally discussed and for which the main wrongdoers are paying nothing, or proceed against a company that has been stripped of all assets and against our sexual assaulter, whose defense will be funded by the very agreement that would otherwise have been turned down. There is nothing fair or just about this.

You have spent your career defending the weak over the powerful and fought on behalf of the innocent. In your inaugural address you stated: "We see corruption eating away at the bedrock of our society and too often we feel powerless to respond, but today my friends we take that power back!" We cannot believe that such a champion of justice would allow an agreement which bankrolls the defense of our abuser if we do not agree to participate.

We would ask that you, as Attorney General, closely examine the proposed settlement and renegotiate the terms so that the victims' fund adequately compensates victims and doesn't fund the alleged wrongdoers' defense, and swiftly reject the punitive terms applicable to non-settling victims which put such severe restrictions on their ability to pursue justice on their own terms. We would be happy to meet with you and explain what we have gone through in this process, how it has impacted our lives and what this unfair agreement means to so many survivors. We implore you to personally intervene to ensure that a fair settlement is reached in which all victims are afforded the level of justice and dignity they deserve.

Sincerely,  
Zoë Brock  
Alexandra Canosa  
Rowena Chiu  
Wedil David

Dominique Huett  
Zelda Perkins  
Kaja Sokola