

Judge rejects \$19 million settlement for Weinstein victims

 abcnews.go.com/US/judge-rejects-19-million-settlement-weinstein-victims/story

A federal judge has rejected a proposed \$19 million settlement between Harvey Weinstein and 15 accusers, contending the offer didn't meet the needs of too many alleged victims of the disgraced movie mogul.

The settlement, which would end litigation by New York Attorney General Letitia James against Weinstein and his company, would have allowed the accusers to file claims for up to \$750,000. However, six of the 15 accusers urged the judge to reject the settlement, contending such payouts would be too small after attorney's fees.

"This is the most one-sided and unfair settlement we have ever seen proposed to a court," attorney Douglas Wigdor said before the hearing on Tuesday.

U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein criticized attorney Elizabeth Fegen, who represents nine clients in the proposed settlement, for placing prospective female plaintiffs who merely met Weinstein as part of their work for his company on equal footing with women who claim they were sexually assaulted or raped.

"Your settlement would include an equality that is not suitable," Hellerstein said during the 20-minute phone hearing.

"All of the women [were] in the zone of danger," as Weinstein "assessed" female employees' vulnerabilities and looks, Fegan contended.

Hellerstein rejected Fegen's argument, noting the case isn't a class-action suit.

Morgan Rubin, a spokeswoman for James' office, said in a statement the attorney general is reviewing the decision.

"Our office has been fighting tirelessly to provide these brave women with the justice they are owed and will continue to do so," Rubin said.

Weinstein is serving a 23-year sentence following his February conviction for sexually assaulting a former production assistant and raping an aspiring actress. He is appealing the verdict.

He still faces rape and sexual assault charges at a court in Los Angeles.