

# Judge Sides With Weinstein Accusers, Rejects Proposed \$25 Million Settlement

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A judge has rejected a proposed \$25 million settlement between **Harvey Weinstein**, his former film company, and numerous women who accused him of sexual misconduct, calling the terms of the deal into question in a Tuesday hearing. Among his concerns, Judge **Alvin Hellerstein** said it was unclear how the money would be distributed, effectively siding with those who objected to the agreement. In addition, millions of dollars from the settlement would have been used to cover the fees of Weinstein's legal team, which Judge Hellerstein found "obnoxious," according to the *New York Times*.

"The judge identified so many problems, it was not even close," said **John Clune**, per the *Times*, a representative for one of the women who objected to the proposal. "Functionally, the whole thing has been thrown out. Everyone wants a good result for these survivors. This wasn't it."

The settlement stems from a \$25 million agreement that was reached last December, one of many suits that have sprung up around Weinstein, a convicted rapist, over the last three years. As *Times* reporters **Megan Twohey** and **Jodi Kantor** note, the civil settlement has been in contention since its proposal—not only because the sum has drastically dropped from its initial, projected amount of \$90 million, but also because its terms would protect Weinstein Company board members from future litigation. In addition, \$12 million would go toward covering some legal fees for Weinstein, his brother, **Bob Weinstein**, who helped run the Weinstein Company, and other members of the company's board. Prior to Tuesday's hearing, several accusers filed formal objections to the agreement.

"We have been saying for over a year and a half that the settlement terms and conditions were unfair and should never be imposed on sexual assault survivors," **Douglas H. Wigdor** and two other lawyers representing several women who had challenged the settlement said in a statement, per the outlet. "We were surprised that class counsel and the New York attorney general did not recognize this fact but are pleased that Judge Hellerstein swiftly rejected the one-sided proposal. On behalf of our clients, we look forward to pursuing justice against Harvey Weinstein and his many enablers."

Representatives for Weinstein declined to comment on the case. On Monday, Weinstein attorney **Imran H. Ansari** said the "practical reality is that outside the settlement the plaintiffs face an uncertain financial recovery, with the Weinstein Company bankrupt, and Mr. Weinstein defending legal matters, facing debt and judgments, frozen assets, and a

line of creditors looking for compensation. Mr. Weinstein's current and future financial state is far from healthy, not only has his personal liberty been taken from him, but his financial liberty as well."

In February, the former Hollywood mogul was found guilty of committing a criminal sexual act in the first degree and rape in the third degree and sentenced to 23 years in prison by a New York judge. Weinstein contracted coronavirus in prison, but a representative later said he had recovered.

Weinstein still faces a criminal trial in Los Angeles, where the District Attorney's Office charged him with forcible rape, forcible oral copulation, sexual penetration by use of force, and sexual battery by restraint. Weinstein has denied the claims. If convicted, he could face up to 28 years in California prison. His extradition has been delayed because of the ongoing pandemic.