

# A woman says she's paid \$185,000 just to get her sexual harassment case against Ernst & Young heard in court

 [insider.com/karen-ward-sexual-harassment-case-ey-cost-her-185000-2019-7](https://www.insider.com/karen-ward-sexual-harassment-case-ey-cost-her-185000-2019-7)

- Karen Ward, 49, said in a complaint filed last year that she was fired from Ernst & Young in 2015 after she accused her boss of sexual harassment.
- In new court filings seen by HuffPost, Ward said she has put \$185,000 toward having her sexual harassment and discrimination complaint against EY heard in court.
- Ward said her case is currently in arbitration and is asking for it to be moved to open court.
- Visit INSIDER's homepage for more stories.

A woman who accused her former boss of sexual harassment says she's paid \$185,000 just to have her case heard in court, according to a court filing seen by HuffPost.

Karen Ward, 49, said in a complaint filed last year that she was fired from Ernst & Young in 2015 after she accused her boss of sexual harassment.

Ward, a former partner in EY who worked in the company's North Carolina offices, said that her former supervisor complimented her breasts, asked her to accompany him to strip clubs, and texted her at 2 a.m. to meet him for drinks while on a work trip, according to a complaint filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission seen by the Associated Press. Ward said she was fired after complaining to senior executives.

Last year, EY called Ward's claims "unfounded and baseless," saying she was fired for her work performance, AP reported at the time. In a statement to INSIDER, an EY spokesperson said Ward's firing "was wholly unrelated to her gender and was entirely performance based."

In new court documents filed last week seen by the AP, Ward said she has put \$185,000 toward having her sexual harassment and discrimination complaint against EY to be heard in court.

"How many victims will even be able to afford to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to have their claims heard?" Ward and her lawyers said in the filings, according to HuffPost. Her contract at EY contained a forced arbitration clause, Ward said.

Ward said her case is currently in arbitration, where retired judges and lawyers can charge as much as \$1,000 an hour for the private court sessions. She has paid the fees for the arbitration thus far with her savings.

In her recent court filing, Ward asked that her case be moved to open court.

"Ms. Ward is pursuing her claims because of her firm belief that discrimination and retaliation of any form is wrong and cannot go unaddressed," attorney Michael Willemin, a partner at Wigdor, the lawfirm representing Ward, told HuffPost. "EY knows this will cause other women to never bring these kinds of claims. They know how they'll be treated."

EY said in a statement to INSIDER: "Karen Ward voluntarily commenced an arbitration proceeding against EY in October 2018. The parties appointed three neutral arbitrators to hear the dispute. The arbitrators, not EY, determined by their ruling several months ago that the cost of the arbitration would be shared by the parties, subject to final resolution of the proceedings."