

Judge Rejects Harvey Weinstein Class-Action Settlement: ‘I Can’t Subscribe to That’

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A New York federal judge on Tuesday rejected an \$18.9 million preliminary settlement in Harvey Weinstein’s sexual-misconduct lawsuits, slamming the “obnoxious” and “phony” action. During the 20-minute video hearing, U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein said the settlement brought by lead plaintiff Louissette Geiss and negotiated by New York Attorney General Letitia James improperly nullifies claims of nonparticipating parties. “The idea that Harvey Weinstein can get a defense fund ahead of the claimants is obnoxious,” Hellerstein said. “The idea you can regulate the claims of people not in the settlement—I can’t subscribe to that.”

The judge also objected to Weinstein and other officers of the Weinstein Company receiving millions in attorneys’ fees, and urged lawyers for the women to move their clients’ cases forward and try to seize Weinstein’s assets. “Instead of wasting your time with phony settlements and attempts to create a class that doesn’t exist,” said Hellerstein, adding that the plaintiffs’ experiences are so various that the case should not be handled as a class action.

Douglas Wigdor and Kevin Mintzer, who represent three plaintiffs who previously called the settlement a “cruel hoax,” said in a statement to The Daily Beast that the deal was unfair to the victims. “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,” the lawyers said, along with attorney Bryan Arbeit.