

Federal Judge Rejects Harvey Weinstein's \$19 Million Settlement With Alleged Victims

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A federal New York judge has thrown out a proposed \$18.9 million settlement between convicted rapist and former movie producer Harvey Weinstein, and several women.

U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein said the offer failed to adequately compensate many of the victims who allege they were sexually assaulted or raped by Weinstein.

He also faulted the money included in the settlement that would help pay Weinstein's legal bills.

In a telephone hearing, Hellerstein said it was unfair to include women who'd merely met Weinstein with those making more grievous charges, Reuters reported.

"Not every woman was captured in the same way," Hellerstein said. "Your settlement would create inequality among all of those people."

Under the proposal, which was drafted after years of negotiation, each woman would have been entitled to file a claim for up to \$750,000. A sum attorneys representing alleged victims say doesn't come close to covering the pain, suffering and legal costs many of the women have faced.

Weinstein would not have admitted any wrongdoing under the settlement.

"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," attorneys Douglas Wigdor, Bryan Arbeit and Kevin Mintzer said in a joint statement. They represent six accusers who objected to the settlement.

"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."

A 36-page brief by those opposed to the settlement filed to the court on Monday claimed the proposed settlement "diverted approximately \$7.3 million to The Weinstein Company estate to cover administrative and general unsecured claims in the company's bankruptcy proceeding. ... According to public records, among those unsecured creditors included Harvey and Robert Weinstein, other former Weinstein Company directors, lawyers, major

corporations and famous actors."

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Fegan, an attorney representing the class action plaintiffs, said she was disappointed by Hellerstein's ruling.

"We've long held that we needed to find justice for all the women that Weinstein preyed upon in a fair and equitable way," Fegan said in a statement.

"Now, we need to turn our attention to litigating our clients' individual cases."

New York Attorney General Letitia James, who spearheaded litigation against Weinstein and his company, said her office is considering how to proceed.

"We will review the decision and determine next steps. Our office has been fighting tirelessly to provide these brave women with the justice they are owed and will continue to do so," James said in a statement.

Attorneys for Weinstein have not replied to a request for comment from NPR.

Weinstein, now 68, is serving a 23-year sentence for sexually assaulting one woman and raping another.

He has denied all allegations against him and contends he has never forced anyone to engage in any sex acts. He is appealing the verdict while also facing rape and sexual assault charges in Los Angeles.