

# Judge rejects Harvey Weinstein's nearly \$19 million settlement with accusers

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A federal judge on Tuesday rejected a proposed \$18.9 million class action settlement for women who have alleged sexual abuse or workplace harassment against convicted rapist Harvey Weinstein.

U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein in Manhattan, who laid out his objections during a virtual hearing, said the preliminary civil settlement would not be fair to women who the former film mogul allegedly raped or sexually abused, because it treated them no different from women who had merely met him, Reuters reported.

Hellerstein also took issue with a plan to put aside money to help Weinstein and the board of his former studio, The Weinstein Company, pay legal defense costs.

"The idea that Harvey Weinstein could get a defense fund ahead of the plaintiffs is obnoxious," Hellerstein said at the virtual hearing, according to Reuters.

Attorneys for six of the women involved in the class action suit commended the judge's decision, saying in a joint statement that "the settlement terms and conditions were unfair and should never be imposed on sexual assault survivors."

"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," said the attorneys, Douglas H. Wigdor, Kevin Mintzer, and Bryan Arbeit. "On behalf of our clients, we look forward to pursuing justice against Harvey Weinstein and his many enablers."

In a separate statement, an attorney for one of the other accusers blasted the proposal as a "bogus class action settlement which was only fair to attorneys raking in millions at the expense of the victims." The attorney, Thomas P. Giuffra, said he and his client were "thrilled" by the judge's order.

The office of New York Attorney General Letitia James said in a statement that it 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," a spokesperson for James said.

Weinstein's attorney Imran H. Ansari declined to comment on the judge's decision.

Weinstein was convicted in February of third-degree rape of Jessica Mann, a former aspiring actress, and a count of criminal sexual act in the first degree against Mimi Haley, a former "Project Runway" production assistant.

He was sentenced to 23 years in prison. He is serving his sentence at a maximum-security prison in upstate New York.