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The Modesto Former Cal State dean awarded \$6M in harassment suit. Fresno State cases cited

Robert Kuwada

Wed, October 22, 2025 at 4:40 PM EDT
3 min read

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Interim CSU Chancellor Jolene Koester is a central figure in a discrimination lawsuit filed by two former administrators at Cal State San Bernardino.

A jury awarded a former associate dean at Cal State San Bernardino Palm Desert \$6 million after finding [the university failed to prevent](#) pervasive gender harassment and discrimination and that she had been retaliated against in violation of state law.

In the lawsuit, Anissa Rogers alleged Cal State San Bernardino did not properly handle gender-based harassment and discrimination and that CSU leadership either ignored or mishandled complaints of gender inequity and mistreatment, allowing for a hostile work environment for women at the campus.

In the lawsuit, which was [filed in March 2023](#), Rogers pointed to former interim chancellor Jolene Koester, alleging "a barrage of witnesses have emerged to corroborate, under penalty of perjury, that, despite Dr. Koester's trite platitudes, Dr. Koester is known to have 'coached' female employees about how best to endure well-documented sex harassment, discrimination and retaliation by high-ranking male employees."

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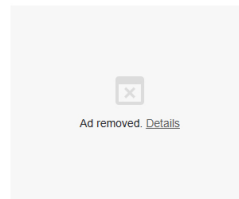
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CSU attorneys recently lost a [motion to quash a trial subpoena](#) issued to Koester in a discrimination and retaliation lawsuit filed by a Fresno State employee, which is scheduled to go to trial next year.

Rogers' attorneys in the lawsuit also singled out former CSU chancellor Joseph I. Castro, who was [forced to resign](#) in February 2022 for his handling or mishandling of harassment complaints against a senior administrator when he was the president at Fresno State. [Castro died in late August](#).

"Despicably, just like Dr. Koester, who replaced him, Castro did absolutely nothing to prevent the sex harassment from occurring," attorneys said, in the lawsuit.

"He enabled it. Castro recommended the administrator for a top position at defendant CSU's San Marcos campus, lauding the administrator as 'an exemplary colleague and campus leader.'"



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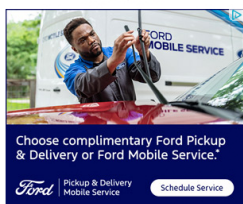
David M. deRubertis, lead trial attorney for Rogers, argued in court that the gender-based mistreatment was inevitable after top university officials ignored a 2015 campus climate survey that suggested a culture of fear, intimidation, gender-based mistreatment and bullying at the university. The survey also recommended adopting an anti-bullying policy and an audit of human resources practices and policies. University president Tomas Morales testified that neither recommendation was implemented.

"This verdict is a message," deRubertis said, in a press release. "Cal State can't ignore the systemic problems of gender-based mistreatment within its ranks. The jury saw the importance of holding this institution to account, and we're very appreciative of that."

The \$6 million award includes \$3 million each for past and for future noneconomic damages including mental suffering, loss of enjoyment of life, physical pain, physical impairment, inconvenience, grief, anxiety, humiliation and emotional distress.

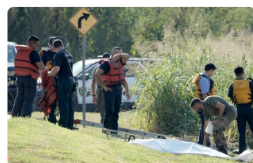
The case was tried in Los Angeles County Superior Court. Rogers was represented by deRubertis, Courtney Abrams and Andrew Friedman. The three attorneys also represent Clare Weber, a former vice provost at the San Bernardino campus. A lawsuit filed by Weber based on claims of gender pay inequity, harassment and retaliation is expected to go to trial next year.

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The award, "represents a resounding rejection of CSU's long-running denials of gender bias within its ranks," Abrams said, in the press release. "Dr. Rogers stood up not only for herself, but also the other women who have been subjected to gender-based double-standards within the Cal State system."

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The CSU board of trustees, Morales and former dean of the Palm Desert campus Jake Zhu were named as defendants in the lawsuit.

Morales and Zhu, according to the suit, were the subject of a number of reports of gender-based abuse that were made directly to Koester.

Koester "did absolutely nothing," according to the suit, and the abuse continued.

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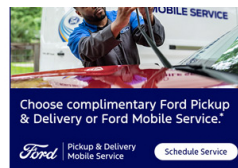


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BUSINESS INSIDER

Judge puts Epstein victim lawsuits against Bank of America and BNY on the fast track

Jacob Shamsian



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Jeffrey Epstein at the 1995 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. Patrick McMullan/Patrick McMullan via Getty Images

- Jeffrey Epstein victims' lawsuits against banks could go to trial as soon as next summer.
- The lawsuits allege Bank of America and BNY ignored red flags in his sex-trafficking operations.
- Previous similar lawsuits against JPMorgan and Deutsche Bank resulted in costly settlements.

A pair of lawsuits against banks from [Jeffrey Epstein](#) victims is going on the fast track.

At a Monday hearing, US District Judge Jed Rakoff ordered lawyers to comply with quick-turnaround deadlines for the cases, which were filed against Bank of America and BNY.

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The two lawsuits, filed in October, alleged the banks ignored red flags related to Epstein's sex-trafficking operation.

Rakoff set November deadlines for motions to dismiss the cases, with an oral argument for December 15.

The judge ordered that all discovery, including depositions, must be completed by February 27.

If the cases go to trial, they'll be back-to-back in May and June of 2026, Rakoff said.

The lawsuit against Bank of America alleges that one of Epstein's employees instructed one of his victims to open an account with the bank in her own name, and then used it to pay her rent while Epstein sexually abused her over the course of several years. The account was also used for other purposes, which may have facilitated the sex-trafficking of other women, the lawsuit alleges.

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The lawsuit against BNY alleged the financial institution processed \$378 million in payments to Epstein's victims while failing to flag those transactions as suspicious.

"The claims in the lawsuit are meritless, and we will vigorously defend against it," a BNY spokesperson told Business Insider. A Bank of America spokesperson said the bank "will vigorously defend itself."

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Epstein killed himself in jail in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges. Ghislaine Maxwell, his former partner, was convicted of trafficking girls to him for sex in 2021 and is serving a 20-year prison sentence.

Both lawsuits could help shed light on how Epstein made and moved around his money. His estate was valued at about \$630 million at the time of his death.

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Both lawsuits were brought by lawyers at Boies Schiller Flexner, along with attorneys Brad Edwards and Brittany Henderson, who have collectively represented more than 100 Epstein victims over the years.

The attorneys filed similar lawsuits in late 2022 against JPMorgan Chase and Deutsche Bank.

Rakoff, who also oversaw those lawsuits, put them on the fast track as well. JPMorgan agreed to settle the case for \$290 million. Deutsche Bank agreed to settle for \$75 million.

BNY is represented by WilmerHale, with some of the same attorneys who represented JPMorgan in the lawsuit against the bank. Bank of America is represented by the Big Law firm Jones Day.

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At the end of Monday's hearing, Rakoff said he hoped the parties would not settle the lawsuits.

"With lawyers of this supreme quality, if this case settles, I will be extraordinarily disappointed because I will be deprived of two fantastic trials by excellent lawyers," Rakoff said. "Now, I don't want to discourage you from settling. There are some of my colleagues that think settling is always the way to go. But I'm much more selfish and I would love to see two very good trials."

Read the original article on Business Insider

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Up next

The Dallas Express

AT&T Wins \$146 Million Federal Contract — Then Lays Off Americans And Hires Foreign Workers

Kellen McGovern Jones - Senior Investigative Reporter
Mon, October 27, 2025 at 11:00 AM EDT
5 min read

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Dallas Texas USA - 123 2025 AT and T Discovery District with The Exchange Food Hall and lush green trees and grass in downtown Dallas Texas USA | Image by Marcus E Jones/Shutterstock

AT&T has quietly expanded its foreign workforce while securing a multimillion-dollar federal contract intended to bolster U.S. national security infrastructure.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security awarded AT&T a 10-year, \$146 million contract last year to maintain and expand emergency communications systems such as the Government Emergency Telecommunications Service and Wireless Priority Service, [according](#) to a September 2024 company press release. The award extends AT&T's long-running partnership with DHS into next-generation 5G networks.

At the same time, federal immigration data shows the telecom giant has continued to rely on foreign labor. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) H-1B Data Hub, **388 H-1B workers were approved at AT&T between January 1, 2024, and the first six months of 2025.**

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This comes at a moment when American workers at the company have suffered [layoffs](#) and are [reportedly](#) faced with the possibility of more in the future.

The privately operated H-1B Salary Database, which tracks Labor Condition Applications (LCAs) filed with the U.S. Department of Labor, shows AT&T filed **741 H-1B applications between April 2024 and mid-2025.** These filings covered positions in Plano and Dallas, Texas, and Alpharetta, Georgia, with a range from **\$101,760 to \$500,000.**

While these numbers are within competitive industry ranges, some discrepancies appear between the federal filings and AT&T's own public job postings.

A LinkedIn [post](#) archived from 2025 lists AT&T's **Lead Software Engineering** positions with pay between **\$135,000 and \$215,000**, roughly matching the median H-1B filings for similar roles.

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However, a current [posting](#) on AT&T's own website for a **Lead System Engineering** position in Plano offers a salary between **\$163,000 and \$215,800**, which stands notably higher than several recent H-1B filings for comparable system engineering jobs in the same city — many of which were logged in 2024 at **\$145,000 to \$155,000.**

The data suggests AT&T may be paying foreign hires slightly below what its website advertises for equivalent positions, although both figures remain within federal compliance ranges.

The controversy comes as AT&T faces renewed scrutiny in Dallas over its long-term commitment to the city it once called home. As *The Dallas Express* previously [reported](#), the company has refused to clarify whether it plans to remain in its downtown headquarters, echoing the same silence that preceded its abrupt 2008 departure from San Antonio. That move blindsided civic leaders there, and Dallas officials now fear a repeat as AT&T executives quietly tour suburban campuses.

Against that backdrop, the company's growing reliance on foreign labor while receiving lucrative federal contracts raises questions about corporate loyalty —



not only to its workers, but to the communities that helped build its brand.

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