

Facebook Settles Class-Action Suit by Contract Content Moderators for \$52M

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Facebook settled a class-action lawsuit on behalf of content moderators for \$52 million, along with agreeing to steps toward providing a safer work environment for those contract workers.

The Joseph Saveri Law Firm and Burns Charest revealed the terms of the settlement Tuesday.

A spokesperson for Facebook said, "We are grateful to the people who do this important work to make Facebook a safe environment for everyone. We're committed to providing them additional support through this settlement and in the future."

According to the two law firms, more than 10,000 current and former content moderators who worked for Facebook's vendors in Arizona, California, Florida and Texas will receive \$1,000 apiece.

In cases where class members were diagnosed with specified conditions due to the work they performed, they will receive payments that can go toward medical treatment for those conditions and, depending on the amount remaining in the settlement fund, they may be eligible for additional damage awards of up to \$50,000.

Steps Facebook agreed to in order to provide a safer work environment for content moderators in the U.S. employed by its vendors include requiring those vendors to provide coaching

sessions with licensed mental health counselors, other mental health support and enhancements to the reviewing tools they use to make their work safer.

The lawsuit, *Scola v. Facebook*, was filed in Superior Court of the State of California in September 2018, on behalf of lead plaintiff Selena Scola of San Francisco.

According to the suit, Scola worked as a public content contractor at Facebook's offices from approximately June 19, 2017, through March 1, 2018, employed by staffing company Pro Unlimited.

Scola claimed in the lawsuit that she was formally diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder after experiencing symptoms including fatigue, insomnia and social anxiety, and those symptoms are triggered by acts including touching a computer mouse, entering a cold building, seeing violence on television, hearing loud noises or being startled.

The suit also claimed that class members were denied protection against severe psychological and other injuries resulting from repeated exposure to graphic content such as child sexual abuse, beheadings, terrorism, animal cruelty and other disturbing images.

Co-lead counsel Steve Williams of the Joseph Saveri Law Firm in San Francisco said, "We are so pleased that Facebook worked with us to create an unprecedented program to help people performing work that was unimaginable even a few years ago. The harm that can be suffered from this work is real and severe. This settlement will provide meaningful relief, and I am so proud to have been part of it."

Daniel Charest of Burns Charest in Dallas, another co-lead counsel, added, "This groundbreaking litigation fixed a major workplace problem involving developing technology and its impact on real workers who suffered in order to make Facebook safer for its users. Ultimately, the settlement is a great

result for the class members.”

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