

The settlement with Bob Filner's former executive assistant is the largest claim settled in the scandal involving the former mayor

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City of San Diego Pays \$667K in Filner Sexual Harassment Claim

An ex-employee of former mayor Bob Filner who claimed she was kissed, touched and put in a headlock, reached a settlement with the City Tuesday.

The San Diego City Council approved the payment of \$667,000 to settle a lawsuit filed by Benelia Santos-Hunter who once worked as an executive assistant in the mayor's office. It's the largest settlement paid in connection with the scandal that led to Filner's resignation in August 2013.

Santos-Hunter claims she was subjected to "inappropriate sexually based comments and advances, including physical touching, confinement, hostility, outrageous demands and threats, screaming" that resulted in hospitalization.

What started with a kiss on the forehead in February 2013 grew into hugs, unwelcome compliments and physical touching.

"There were a number of comments made to her that no reasonable man would make to a subordinate," said attorney Josh Gruenberg. "There was physical touching involved. At one point he did lock her in his kitchen and he locked the door behind the two of them."

The following week he placed her in a headlock in the city's conference room, she said.

Santos-Hunter said she informed the city's Assistant Chief Operating Officer Scott Chadwick. In court documents, she claims Chadwick told her, "'It's not illegal to be an a--hole. Is there anything else?' or words to that effect."

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Four months later, Filner was sentenced to 90 days house arrest after entering a guilty plea to felony false imprisonment and two misdemeanor charges of battery involving victims of sexual harassment.

City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said his office anticipates the total paid out in claims stemming from the Filner scandal will be just more than \$1 million.

There are two more cases pending, Goldsmith said. One had to do with a name tag. The other had to do with the so-called headlock, he said.

Original Article: <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/politics/Filner-Settlement-San-Diego-Santos-Hunter-367391361.html>