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Cardozo Civil Rights Clinic

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Civil Rights Clinic Reaches Settlement for Those Subjected to Polar Vortex Conditions in Federal Jail



Professor Betsy Ginsberg and her Civil Rights Clinic worked with Professor Alexander Reinert and the law firm Emery Celli Brinckerhoff Abady Ward & Maazel to come to a settlement with the federal government after people incarcerated at Metropolitan Detention Center, a Brooklyn federal jail, were subjected to a week without heat or electricity during a 2019 polar vortex.

The New York Times reported that during that period, people in the jail were left in cold, dark cells with toilets that did not flush and without access to food and medical care.

Those who experienced these harsh conditions would share up to \$10 million in compensation, which would be paid in varying amounts to the people who submitted claims, once approved. According to the New York Times, the agreement's plan involves paying 69 people whose medical conditions were untreated during that time up to \$17,500. An additional 945 people may receive \$8,750.

The case involved the work of Cardozo students over four years. Those students include Alexander Hunter '21, Gabriella Javaheri '21, Kira Brekke '21, Clare

Haugh '21, Meghan Kacsmar '23, Juliana D'Alleva '23, Celeste Kabemba '23 and Alison Aimers '24.