



[The Largest Mold Settlement](#)

With the country in a recession, some are looking to the court system to make ends meet. Lawsuits are flying more than ever in today's society and it reminded me of the biggest mold settlement case in history.

While many think of Melinda Ballard and her \$32 million settlement against her insurance company as the catalyst of the "mold is gold" mantra. The landmark case that skyrocketed mold litigation by 1000 percent in Texas the following year is actually not the largest settlement ever awarded to a mold victim.

The next year after Melinda Ballard won the case, the Farmer's Insurance Group struck back in an appeals court and had the settlement reduced to \$4 million. This means the trophy now goes to runner up case

Gorman vs Crenshaw for an undisputed \$22.6 million. This is the largest toxic mold settlement for a personal injury lawsuit – at least, so far.

17 companies were included in the suit, but Crenshaw Lumber Co. Inc. took the brunt of it, paying 13 of the \$22.6 million. Crenshaw supplied the wood to build the Gorman's 1999 home. The wood used to build the house frame was improperly stored and mold was growing on framing studs by the time it was used for construction. However, as part of the settlement, Crenshaw admits to no wrongdoing.

In 2000, Kellen Gorman was born. But five years later he cannot talk, still needs diapers, and requires more care than is normal for children his age. The Gorman's contend that the mold caused their son brain damage and the case went to court in 2005.

Mold is responsible for a multitude of symptoms, but the link between mold and neurological damage is still controversial. But it's true that infants are especially susceptible to negative health effects of mold because of their underdeveloped immune systems. The defense was disorganized and unprepared, and the jury was convinced of this link by medical experts.

Linking such serious health effects to mold will always be controversial since the losing side of the argument stands to lose so much. We can't wait for the dust to settle and science to give us a definite answer when it comes to either the health of a child or the loss of millions. Both should be avoided by dealing with mold responsibly and proactively before it becomes such a serious problem for both parties.