

Ruling delayed on Teamsters oversight

Judge reserves decision on deal to end fed consent order

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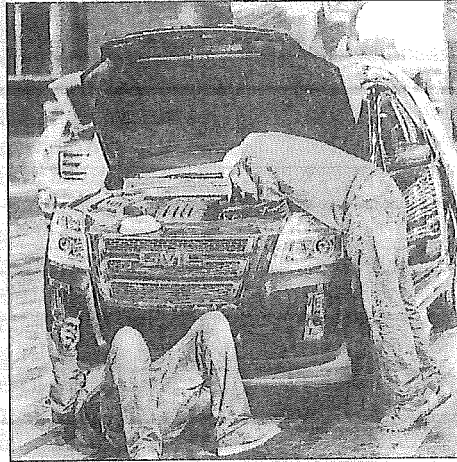
New York — The U.S. Attorney's Office and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters asked a federal judge Wednesday to approve a landmark settlement that will phase out and end the government's 25-year consent decree to keep mob influence out of the 1.4 million-member union.

After an hour-long hearing during, Chief U.S. District Judge Loretta Preska said she would rule later. She gave no indication of when or how she might rule on the deal that would phase out government oversight over five years.

In January, the U.S. attorney in New York asked a federal judge to end the consent order that's been in place since March 1989.

The union and government entered into the consent decree in settlement of a civil racketeering suit brought against the Teamsters by Rudolph Giuliani, who was then the U.S. attorney in New York.

The suit alleged that the union had made a "devil's pact" with organized crime and was



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The Teamsters entered into a consent decree in 1989 to settle a civil racketeering suit.

dominated by the mob — or La Cosa Nostra, as the FBI referred to the Mafia.

The issue of the mob influence in the union wasn't addressed during the hearing.

Barbara Harvey, lawyer for the group Teamsters for a Democratic Union, argued Wednesday the agreement should be changed to include more protections for candidates to challenge union leaders.

She said the group supported ending the

agreement, but wants added protections including making permanent the reformed 2001 election rules.

She opposed allowing the union to appoint election officers and a person to hear appeals of election disputes.

The biggest issue, Harvey pushed, was to keep permanent the ability of a candidate to get on the ballot after receiving as little as 5 percent of convention delegates.

Even that low threshold has made it tough for dissident candidates to get on the ballot, she said. In the 2011 union election, opponents of President James Hoffa and his slate of candidates fielded only a candidate for president — and none for any of the other national positions, Harvey said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tara M. La Morte said the agreement would allow the government to exit oversight of the union's affairs, but maintain permanent "safeguards to protect the rights of members."

She said the government opposed keeping the 2001 rules in place because "the rules can become stale" and the union should have the flexibility to make changes in the future.

Teamsters lawyer Viet Dinh noted that changes to election rules must be disclosed to all members and then must be approved by the union's constitutional convention.