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Malpractice Survivors Urge Local Legislators to Protect Patient Safety and Oppose “Caps” Bill

Urbana—Standing in front of a 15 foot wheelchair to symbolize their injuries caused by medical negligence, Peggy McGuire and Conda Zimmerman joined with Center for Justice and Democracy’s Patient Safety Tour in Urbana today. The survivors called on local lawmakers to stop legislation in the State House and Senate to cap compensation to victims of preventable medical errors.

“This proposal would devastate people already distraught by their losses,” said McGuire, who was injured due to medical malpractice. “People depend on this compensation to restore their quality of life. Instead, lawmakers should be looking to reduce medical errors in the first place. We need to protect patients, including women, children, and seniors. The insurance industry wants to take money from these people without even proving it would lower doctors’ insurance rates.”

McGuire is part of a statewide Patient Safety Tour sponsored by the Center for Justice and Democracy, a non-profit consumer protection organization. The tour comes at a crucial time as both the Illinois House and Senate are poised to vote on legislation to cap compensation to medical malpractice victims. The tour came to Champaign to urge Representative Jakobsson and Senator Winkel to oppose the anti-consumer legislation. Representative Black, from nearby Danville is a co-sponsor of the bill.

“Patients and consumer groups are asking Representative Jakobsson and Senator Winkel to stand up for the rights of all Illinois residents to obtain justice through our courts system if they are harmed by a negligent doctor, hospital or nursing home,” said Mark Fraley, Field Organizer for CJ&D-Illinois. “They have the opportunity to address the real problem with malpractice—too many preventable injuries and deaths from medical negligence. They can stand up as heroes for patient safety and consumer protection by voting against these ‘cap’ bills.”

Bills under consideration in both legislative chambers would severely cap “non-economic” compensation to patients injured by negligent medical care. Numerous studies have shown that these caps do not work to lower malpractice insurance for physicians, but do severely limit the access of women, children, seniors, and the poor to the court.

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The Center for Justice and Democracy is a non-profit, non partisan consumer protection organization that works to educate citizens about the importance of the civil justice system. For more information, see www.centerjd.org.

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