



Civil Justice Resource Group
P.O. Box 3326
New York, NY 10008
Tel: 212.267.2801
Fax: 212.764.4298
<http://law.suffolk.edu/cjrg>

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Contact: Geoff Boehm, Laurie Beacham
212/267-2801

NEWS RELEASE

Prominent Scholars Join Forces to Fight Assault on Civil Justice System

With attacks on the civil justice system reaching a fevered pitch in Washington D.C., scholars from law and graduate schools around the country announced today the formation of the “Civil Justice Resource Group” (CJRG) to respond to the widespread disinformation campaign by critics of the civil justice system.

The group is composed of 24 prominent scholars from 14 states, who are available to speak to the media, opinion leaders and others about a range of civil justice issues. CJRG’s web site is being hosted by the Suffolk University Law School. See <http://www.law.suffolk.edu/cjrg> or <http://cjrg.com> for more information, a list of CJRG members and contact information.

According to Richard W. Wright, professor at the Chicago-Kent College of Law and former chair of the Tort and Insurance Law Section of the Association of American Law Schools, “Those who attack the civil justice system increasingly rely on misleading anecdotes and inaccurate information while ignoring the results of objective empirical studies that contradict almost all of their claims. We hope the CJRG becomes the first place that news organizations, opinion leaders and lawmakers turn to for accurate information about one of the most cherished and important institutions in America, the civil justice system.”

“As an academic researcher who studies the tort system, and who has testified before federal and state legislatures on tort reform issues, it has often disturbed me how uninformed legislators are about the realities of the tort system, and how much misinformation opponents of the civil justice system feed them,” said Lucinda Finley, Professor of Trial and Appellate Advocacy at the University of Buffalo Law School. “The aim of the Civil Justice Resource Group is to correct this situation, to insure that important policy decisions are based on sound, impartial research.”

The CJRG is composed of leading academics with expertise in one or more issues related to the U.S. civil justice system. Several members of the group specialize in conducting empirical studies of its practical operation and effects. The CJRG intends to publish briefing books and other materials to help inform the debate over these issues.

One of the areas the CJRG intends to cover is the national debate over medical malpractice. Explained Joseph D. Harbaugh, Dean and Professor of Law at Nova Southeastern University's law school, "Doctors, their liability insurers, and politicians seeking to make easy points, are once again trying to blame recent sharp increases in doctors' liability insurance premiums on the civil justice system rather than on insurance pricing practices that fail to smooth over investment cycles, lax regulation of doctors and their liability insurers, and medical errors generated by the increasingly bureaucratic nature of medical treatment."

It should be noted that while members of the group have come together under the auspices of the Center for Justice & Democracy, their views are objective and independent of CJ&D's. However, each participant has indicated support for CJ&D's mission of educating the public about the value and importance of the civil justice system.

For more information, contact: geoff@cjrg.com

For media inquiries, contact: laurieb@cjrg.com

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