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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
January 4, 2005

Contact: Amber Hard, CJ&D-Illinois, 847/400-7696;
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(CJ&D national office), 212/267-2801 or 917/847-6000.

Illinois Medical Malpractice Survivors Demand Meeting with President Bush

Survivors Ask Bush to Stop Trying to Bail out Insurance and Drug Companies at the Expense of Patients

Collinsville, IL – Twenty-nine survivors of medical malpractice in Illinois sent a letter today to President Bush requesting a face-to-face meeting. The President is scheduled to meet with members of the Illinois State Medical Society on January 5 in Collinsville at a publicity event designed to push for federal legislation that takes away patients' legal rights.

At 10:30 am CT today, the survivors will be appearing at a news conference at the Collinsville Holiday Inn to discuss the letter and to protest the President's planned visit.

Bush supports legislation that would severely reduce the rights of medical malpractice victims nationwide, as well as victims of dangerous FDA-approved drugs. The bill includes a \$250,000 cap on non-economic damages. It would limit the liability not only of malpracticing doctors, but also hospitals, HMOs, nursing homes and manufacturers of drugs and medical devices.

The text of the letter follows:

January 3, 2005

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington DC 20500
VIA FACSIMILE: (202) 456-2461
Email: president@whitehouse.gov

Dear President Bush:

We, or our family members, have been injured or killed as a result of medical malpractice in the State of Illinois.

We respectfully request a meeting with you on January 5, 2005, either before or after you meet with members of the Illinois State Medical Society in Collinsville, Illinois.

You have called medical malpractice lawsuits “frivolous” and you blame patients who sue for doctors’ skyrocketing insurance rates - even though the blame rests squarely on the insurance industry, not us.

Our cases are not frivolous. You need to hear our stories, and to understand the unacceptable degree of medical malpractice that goes on in this country and our proposals to solve this problem.

It is unacceptable for you to meet with doctors, or with representatives from hospitals, drug companies, HMOs, and the insurance industry - indeed with all the corporate interests who would benefit from your cruel medical malpractice legislation - while failing to meet with the very people who will be hurt most.

The *Los Angeles Times* recently reported, “[s]pecial interests spent \$1.1 billion during the first half of 2004 on lobbyists and advertising campaigns” and “topping the list of spenders were the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Medical Assn., which spent a combined \$39 million during the six-month period to appeal for medical liability limits.”

We cannot compete with these kinds of financial contributions from special interest lobby groups. But we are citizens who have lost a tremendous amount and you need to listen to our stories as well.

Please contact Amber Hard at the Center for Justice & Democracy – Illinois, to set up this meeting. You can reach her at 847/400-7696.

We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Debra Allensworth

PHIL ATHERTON

SHEILA AUSTIN
St. Elmo, IL

Sharon Baker

Jeanne A. Bouillon
Gillespie, IL

KIM CRUSE
Pocahontas, IL

Angela Evans
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DON FANSHER
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