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STUDY SHOWS HOW LAWSUITS SAVE LIVES AND CAN MITIGATE OUR NATION'S MOST SERIOUS CRISES

NEW YORK — The Center for Justice & Democracy at New York Law School (CJ&D) released today *Lifesavers 2021: CJ&D's Guide to Lawsuits that Protect Us All*. The study describes over 125 lawsuits that have led to major safety improvements benefiting large numbers of people, spanning well over 50 years. According to co-author Emily Gottlieb, CJ&D's Deputy Director for Law & Policy, "*Lifesavers* shows how lawsuits serve an invaluable purpose by causing manufacturers, employers, polluters, hospitals, law enforcement and other entities to stop their dangerous or negligent behavior, and gives them the proper economic incentive to become more safe and responsible. These cases protect us all, whether or not we ever go to court."

Said co-author Joanne Doroshow, CJ&D Executive Director, "The report's release coincides with several national crises: the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of violent hate groups and the use of excessive force by some law enforcement. It shows how civil lawsuits have helped mitigate each one of these crises by holding wrongdoers legally and financially accountable. Its release also comes as a time when special interest lobbyists are pushing for legal immunity laws in states around the country. *Lifesavers* stands as irrefutable evidence that immunity laws are dangerous. Lawsuits save lives, and we as a society would suffer tremendously if our civil justice system were weakened in any significant respect."

According to the report, "The study includes some cases recently brought against COVID-19 super-spreader establishments," which led to safer workplaces. Other cases have resulted in "the redesign or recall of a product, a changed hospital procedure, safer law enforcement, a more secure public area, the bankruptcy of a hate group, the protection of sexually-abused children or a cleaner environment."

The study explains that when it comes to the recent rise of violent hate groups, "it is everyone's hope that the criminal justice system will function properly to hold accountable those responsible for current violence and insurrection. However, it should be noted that in the past, more was needed than criminal prosecutions to weaken hate groups. Particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, civil lawsuits by hate crime victims were used effectively to bankrupt several white supremacists and Nazi organizations, while also directly responding to the financial needs of victims. These cases demonstrate that civil lawsuits can sometimes provide the only effective means to put dangerous hate groups out of business."

Said Doroshow, “The civil justice system is one of the great achievements of American democracy and an important safeguard of freedom. Unlike other, weaker democracies which have abolished the civil jury, our system, thus far, has largely withstood the assaults. The jury’s roots are deeper here. The American colonists fought the Revolutionary War in significant part over England’s repeated attempts to restrict jury trials. Over the last 40 years, the right to civil justice system has been battered. But as *Lifesavers* shows, after 245 years and just as the nation’s founders had hoped, the system still works.”

A copy of the study can be found here: <http://centerjd.org/content/lifesavers-2021>

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