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## **Who We Are:**

The Center for Justice & Democracy at New York Law School (CJ&D) is a national tax-exempt, non-partisan organization dedicated to educating the public about the importance of the civil justice system and fighting attacks on the rights of injured victims. CJ&D is the only national consumer group in the country dedicated exclusively to this mission. CJ&D was established in 1998. In 2011, CJ&D entered an exciting partnership with New York Law School and currently helps teach a project-based learning course called Civil Justice Through the Courts.

## **Our Mission:**

We are working to stop laws that restrict victims' rights; to preserve and improve consumers' access to the civil courts; to increase corporate, professional and governmental accountability through the civil justice system; and to create renewed respect for lawyers and their work.

## **The Problem:**

The power and authority of judges and civil juries, and the reputation of lawyers, are all under significant attack. The collaboration between the insurance industry, the business and medical lobbies, and some elected officials has produced a highly effective anti-civil justice tactical campaign that shows no signs of slowing down.

Although the civil jury system has been under siege for many years, there is no question that the civil jury is one of the least-understood features of our judicial system. Even groups involved with law-related education focus little attention, if any, on the Seventh Amendment, which ensures the right to civil jury trial. CJ&D is helping to fill that educational vacuum.

## **Recent CJ&D Activities:**

CJ&D's work focuses on a range of civil justice issues. They include: examining laws that restrict consumers' or patients' legal rights; federal preemption of state tort law; exposing problems with alternative compensation systems like mandatory binding arbitration, "health courts" and workers compensation; state Attorneys General and their consumer protection role; protecting judicial independence and examining the influence of money in state judicial elections; various issues surrounding the property/casualty insurance industry; product safety and federal regulatory agencies; protective orders and confidential settlements involving health and safety issues; the media's role in promoting myths about the civil justice system; and the Alien Tort Claims statute and human rights violations.

## Health Care/Federal and State Fights

- Our victim organizing, leadership among public interest groups, congressional staff briefings and meetings with the Congressional Budget Office, contributed to ensuring that the health care reform law protected patients' legal rights.
- We have testified numerous times on medical malpractice issues at the state and federal level.
- In addition to countering misinformation about medical malpractice issues and helping to teach other consumer groups about them, we have produced numerous materials about litigation alternative laws that harm patients.

## Helping To Restore Victims Rights

When GM and Chrysler filed for bankruptcy in 2009, both companies sought immunity from past and future product liability suits involving the tens of millions of GM and Chrysler cars on the road. Victims, lawyers, state attorneys general and consumer advocates were outraged. As part of this team, CJ&D organized victim events and news conferences. Facing mounting pressure, the companies agreed to accept responsibility for post-bankruptcy defect-related injuries.

## Groundbreaking Insurance and Civil Justice Studies

- CJ&D and our project, Americans for Insurance Reform, produce high-impact studies. Recent studies include: *Repeat Offenders: How the Insurance Industry Manufactures Crises and Harms America*; *Headline Blues: Civil Justice In The Age of New Media* and *Our Fatal Food Attraction: Regulatory Failures and the Civil Justice System*.
- CJ&D also produces up to date statistical briefing books on the tort system generally, as well as medical malpractice issues.

## Award-Winning Blog, *ThePopTort*

In addition to being a regular contributor to the widely-read and influential *Huffington Post*, CJ&D has its own blog: *The PopTort*. Founded in 2008, ThePopTort.com was selected that year and in later years by *ABA Journal* editors as one of the country's top 100 legal blogs. In honoring *ThePopTort*, the *ABA Journal* editors said, "It's not just because the name reminds us of those tasty toaster treats that we like this blog. ThePopTort takes a witty, clever and irresistibly irreverent approach to otherwise weighty consumer advocacy issues."

## Specialized Web Projects

In 2010, CJ&D created a web-based project called "BP Justice Now!" The goal of this project is to educate the public about the legal cases stemming from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and its aftermath. CJ&D also works with a number of states on websites called "Caps Harm ..." –projects of CJ&D that provide key information about the damage done by "caps" and other "tort reforms" in specific states.

**CJ&D is a non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization. CJ&D relies on support from individual contributors to make our work possible. If you would like to make a tax-deductible gift to CJ&D, we would be most grateful. Thank you!**