



116 W. Illinois Ave., Suite 5E
Chicago, IL 60610
Tel: 312.644.8442
Fax: 312.644.8443
<http://centerjd.org>
Illinois@centerjd.org

Center for Justice and Democracy's Illinois Focus Winter 2006 Newsletter

- **CJ&D Continues to Fight for Consumers and Families**

We are facing renewed attacks on the civil justice system. The major corporations and special interests that fought so virulently for Illinois' new medical liability law that caps compensation for malpractice victims have introduced a new suite of proposals to undermine our rights. Their proposals continue a dangerous trend of tipping the scales of justice in favor of defendants accused of wrongdoing. With their new bills, they aim to drive up costs to victims, reduce compensation to injured people, weaken the jury system, and throw up legal hurdles to keep legitimate suits from being filed.

- **We are working hard to prevent these dangerous proposals from being a reality in Illinois.** We have formed a broad coalition of labor, community, and civil rights groups to work with us in opposing this cruel agenda. We are recruiting people who have used the civil justice system to seek redress for wrongdoing to tell their story to the media, legislators, and the public. We are producing reports and fact sheets to debunk the myths of so-called "tort reform" and demonstrate the importance of the civil justice system.



Molly Akers and her husband Mark.

- **While we take on new challenges, we are continuing to educate the public about medical malpractice,** putting front and center the voices and faces who are effected by them. Molly Akers from New Lenox received an unnecessary operation that left her disfigured and in constant pain. She will have the opportunity to tell her story on the learning channel next month. We are also working to expose the myths behind Illinois' new medical liability bill. The day after the bill was signed the Illinois Division of Insurance demanded that ISMIE-mutual, Illinois' malpractice insurer largest insurer, appear at hearings to investigating the company's "problematic" rate increases.

Join CJ&D - Illinois' Civil Justice Citizen Coalition

Center for Justice and Democracy's Civil Justice Citizen Coalition is a statewide group of Illinoisans and their families who have used the civil justice system to obtain just compensation and hold a wrongdoer accountable. Our mission is to educate Illinois residents about the effect of laws that take away the legal rights of citizens and consumers and weaken the ability of the civil justice system to hold wrongdoers accountable.

Our success in fighting the anti-consumer agenda of large corporations and their friends in the legislature will be partly determined by the willingness of people who have sought justice in the courts to speak at press conferences, attend hearings, write letters to the editor, or simply provide moral support. To find out more about the CJ&D's Civil Justice Citizen Coalition, please contact us at Illinois@centerjd.org or call (312) 644-8442.



CJ&D - Illinois' Civil Justice Coalition.

Laws aimed at weakening the civil justice effect a wide variety of individuals and constituencies. CJ&D – Illinois is working with these constituencies to build a broad-based coalition to defeat the anti-consumer “tort reform” agenda. If your organization wants to sign on to our civil justice coalition, contact us at Illinois@centerjd.org. Specifically, we support:

1. Preserving and protecting access to the civil justice system and ensuring full and fair compensation to victims.
2. Proposals that enhance the public’s right to seek justice in the courts, such as laws that expand patients’ rights to pursue legal action against negligent HMOs.

IL Citizen Action * IL PIRG * NAACP IL. State Conference * Access Living * Cancer Prevention Coalition * IL AFL-CIO * SEIU– Hospital Accountability Project * AFSCME Council 31 * United Food and Commercial Workers # 881 * United Mine Workers of America District 12 * Coalition of Black Trade Unionists * Chicago Coalition for the Homeless * IL. Housing Coalition * IL. Council Against Handgun Violence * Metro Seniors in Action * Nursing Home Monitors.



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Anti-Consumer forces in Springfield seek to undermine our civil justice system

Lawmakers in the State House and Senate have recently introduced a package of bills aimed at undermining the civil justice system in Illinois. If these bills were to become law the impact would be to reduce compensation for people who have been injured or lost loved ones due to corporate negligence or recklessness, force some victims to file lawsuits out of state, even if their injuries occurred in Illinois, and place unreasonable obstacles in the way of citizens’ trying to seek justice in the courts.

Center for Justice and Democracy is fighting to ensure that Big Businesses can’t rewrite the rules of justice to let themselves off the hook. Contact us at Illinois@centerjd.org or (312) 644-8442 to find out to get involved in the fight against this anti-consumer agenda.

