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NEWS RELEASE

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CONSUMER GROUP CALLS BUSH A “LAWSUIT HYPOCRITE”

The Center for Justice & Democracy (CJ&D) today called the Bush Administration “the worst kind of hypocrite” for, on the one hand, denouncing injured consumers who file lawsuits, while at the same time filing its own case for civil damages against a manufacturer whose defective product endangered the President.

It was revealed this week that the secret service purchased for use by high level officials, including President and Laura Bush, defective bullet-proof vests from a company called Second Chance Body Armor. In July, the Department of Justice filed a civil case to collect compensation against the manufacturer and the maker of the defective fiber used in the vest.

The Bush Administration has made weakening the civil justice system a cornerstone of its domestic agenda. The President campaigned on the issue and has strongly supported laws limiting compensation to injured citizens and providing immunity to negligent corporations, while denouncing those who use the courts.

“As the President must now know, defective products will inevitably make their way to marketplace, and the irresponsible companies that produce them must be held accountable in court. In fact, sometimes, lawsuits are the only way to force a defective product off the market. We hope this President now ends his reprehensible campaign against injured consumers who go to court to obtain justice. No one likes a hypocrite,” said Laurie Beacham, Communications Director for CJ&D.

The Government’s lawsuit alleges that the companies knew, years before alerting its customers, that the strength, endurance, and bullet-stopping capacity of the vests were substantially weaker than represented. It only revealed the problem after a California police officer was shot to death wearing the vest and a Pennsylvania officer was seriously wounded. The Government is seeking civil fraud damages under the False Claims Act and common law. A criminal investigation into the matter is also pending.

The Center for Justice & Democracy is a national consumer organization that works to protect the civil justice system. It has issued several studies on so-called “tort reform” proponents who seek to take away consumers’ rights to go to court, but do not hesitate to run to court when they or family members have been hurt. CJ&D has previously labeled President Bush a “lawsuit

hypocrite” for suing a rental car company for an accident involving one of his daughters in which no one was hurt.

For more information, contact the Center for Justice & Democracy, <http://centerjd.org>.

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