



Center for Justice & Democracy
80 Broad Street
Suite 1600
New York, NY 10004
Tel: 212.267.2801
Fax: 212.764.4298
centerjd@centerjd.org
<http://centerjd.org>

For Release:
February 1, 2006

Contact:
Laurie Beacham 212/267-2801; c: 917/847-6000
Amber Hard 312/644-8442; c: 847/400-7696

PRESIDENT AGAIN CHOOSES DEATH OVER LIFE

CJ&D Response to State of the Union Regarding Medical Malpractice and Unsafe Drugs

For many Americans, reforming our health care system is a matter of life or death. President Bush has once again decided to side with death and profits.

The medical malpractice legislation that Bush will advocate during the 2006 State of the Union would take away legal protections that have saved thousands of lives. These laws have protected us from drugs and medical devices like Vioxx, the Dalkon Shield and Copper-7 IUDs, an antibiotic that caused cancer, a pregnancy test that led to false-positives for cancer, and many others.

The Administration's plan will result in Americans dying so that the drug companies can make even more money. Moreover, arguing that limiting the legal rights of patients injured by medical malpractice will lower health care costs is a blatant misrepresentation of facts.

The Annenberg Center's "factcheck.org," has repeatedly challenged the President and the insurance industry's use of bogus statistics to argue that medical malpractice limits would save health care costs. See, e.g., "Insurance Industry Ad Makes Fishy Claim About Lawyers," April 19, 2005 ("In 2004 the Congressional Budget Office found 'no evidence that restrictions on tort liability reduce medical spending.' And in 1999 the Governmental Accountability Office evaluated the study and said that the evidence presented was too narrow for estimating the overall costs of defensive medicine.") See also, "President Uses Dubious Statistics on Costs of Malpractice Lawsuits." January 29, 2004. ("[B]oth the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Budget Office criticize the 1996 study the Bush administration uses as their main support. These nonpartisan agencies suggest savings – if any – would be relatively small.")

The President's plan would broadly restrict the constitutional rights of all Americans to go to court while weakening the system's ability to prevent medical errors and hold reckless drug companies accountable. It will do nothing to help doctors who are being price-gouged by insurance companies. Moreover, it will disproportionately hurt the most severely injured Americans, such as seniors in nursing homes, quadriplegic workers and brain-damaged children.

President Bush should stop putting corporate and special interests before the lives of average Americans and focus on the real reasons why doctors and others are paying more and more for insurance -- the weak economy and corporate irresponsibility by the insurance industry.

