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CONSUMER GROUP CONDEMNS ATTACK ON JUDGES AND JURIES BY CORPORATE FRONT GROUP

The Center for Justice & Democracy today called the newly released “U.S. Tort Liability Index” from The Pacific Research Institute (PRI) “unscientific and meaningless, relying on a combination of discredited studies from other corporate front groups and self-serving categories that have no bearing on a state’s business climate.”

In formulating its rankings, PRI says it consulted “dozens of legal experts.” However, such “experts” were largely top defense firms that defend corporate wrongdoers in court, but not a single consumer group, public interest organization, or attorney who represents average people. In ranking states’ business environments, PRI praises states that have passed anti-consumer laws that take away injured people’s rights and protect corporate malfeasance. “To the extent that this study measures anything, it is the degree to which corporations guilty of egregious wrongs are able to get off the hook for their actions in a particular state,” said Joanne Doroshow, CJ&D’s Executive Director.

The PRI includes a number of irrelevant and absurd factors in its rankings. For instance, it considers whether a state was ranked as a so-called “judicial hellhole” by another corporate front group, the American Tort Reform Association, in its annual report – a report that is equally unscientific and discredited. See: <http://www.centerjd.org/press/release/051213.htm>. The study considers other irrelevant criteria like the number of civil cases filed in a state. “Notably, PRI fails to mention that tort cases are a small percentage of civil cases. Most civil cases are either contractual cases, which are usually brought by businesses against other businesses, or education, taxation or property-related,” said Doroshow.

The study even goes so far as to factor in absurd variables like the number of lawyers residing in a given state, which neglects the fact that most lawyers work in the corporate sector. “This report is nothing more than another attempt by yet another corporate front group to intimidate state officials who stand up for consumers’ rights and honor their juries and judges,” said Doroshow.

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