

February 26, 2015

Hon. Trent Franks, Chairman
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil
Justice
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Steve Cohen, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil
Justice
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Dear Chairman Franks and Ranking Member Cohen:

The undersigned organizations believe that class actions are critically important to compensate victims of illegal behavior and to deter corporate law-breaking. We strongly object to the placement of any further limits on the ability to bring class actions or to recover damages.

When a company practices a pattern of discrimination or receives a large windfall through small injuries to large numbers of people, a class action lawsuit is the only realistic way harmed individuals can afford to challenge this wrongdoing in court. As Justice Stephen Breyer, writing for four dissenting Justices in *AT&T v. Concepcion*, said, "The realistic alternative to a class action is not 17 million individual suits, but zero individual suits, as only a lunatic or a fanatic sues for \$30." Without the class action tool, corporations and businesses can ignore the law far more easily and operate with impunity. Class actions are also important for regulatory agencies, which often rely on information uncovered in class action lawsuits to pursue public enforcement actions against corporate law-breakers.

Class actions have led to changes in corporate behavior that protect us all from many types of illegal conduct, from employment and civil rights violations to price-fixing and consumer fraud to automotive defects to health care abuses. Class actions have led to important recoveries for victims of predatory and discriminatory lending, like illegal auto finance and mortgage loan mark-ups, payday loans, and unlawful practices targeting Servicemembers. Class actions have remedied race and gender employment discrimination. Class actions have led to substantial recoveries for small businesses who have been victims of illegal price-fixing cartels.

We urge Congress stop companies from prohibiting class actions in the fine print of contracts, and to otherwise protect class actions, as they are among the most powerful mechanisms used to secure justice in America.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Justice
Center for Justice & Democracy
Citizen Works
Committee to Support the Antitrust Laws
Connecticut Center for Patient Safety
Consumer Action
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Watchdog
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety
(CARS)
Homeowners Against Deficient Dwellings

Home Owners for Better Building
National Association of Consumer Advocates
(NACA)
National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its
low income clients)
National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-
Term Care
National Consumers League
National Employment Lawyers Association
Public Citizen
U.S. PIRG