

Philip Harnett Corboy, Jr., President of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, Responds to "judicial hellhole" Report

December 16, 2008

Philip Harnett Corboy, Jr., President of the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, responded to the "judicial hellhole" report issued by the American Tort Reform Association (ATRA), a group that represents big corporate interests and not the public interest. Following is his statement which was released on December 16, 2008.

The country's largest corporate interests - led by insurance, tobacco and oil giants - are once again attacking Illinois' civil justice system.

The American Tort Reform Association (ATRA) - a front group for these big corporate interests - released its annual "judicial hellhole" report today. It is nothing more than a public relations stunt designed to further their political and legislative strategies.

This "report" shows that corporate special interests do not like the fact that they cannot always dominate the judicial system in Illinois. When our courts deny wrongdoers a "free pass" when they engage in anti-consumer behavior or make products that injure and kill people, big business unfairly attacks and maligns the judiciary.

ATRA's insinuation that the courts are susceptible to corruption is reprehensible and insulting to hard working judges and juries. The conduct of our governor has nothing to do with the civil justice system. It is important to remember this is the same governor who signed caps into law in 2005 despite the strenuous and vehement objections from a whole host of organizations including the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association.

ATRA has received funding from a "who's who" of corporate special interests including Altria (formerly Philip Morris), Dow Chemical, Exxon, Aetna, Geico, State Farm, Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.

Attorneys

- Philip Harnett Corboy Jr.

The public interest is not served when big corporate interests are able to use their power and influence to dominate the civil justice system. The fact that regular working people - those without clout or connections - can have access to the legal system when they have been wronged is a basic tenet of our democracy and is a value that must be preserved. Illinois should be proud of the fact that our legal system can still protect the rights of working people and hold bad corporate actors accountable.

Philip H. Corboy, Jr.

President - Illinois Trial Lawyers Association