

Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse

P.O. Box 1499
Weslaco, Texas 78599-1499

Phone: (956) 968-3141
Fax: (956) 968-0210

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**CONTACT: BILL SUMMERS
(956) 968-3141**

TEXAS EARNS TOP MARKS FOR LAWSUIT REFORMS, BUT FAILS IN STOPPING LAWSUIT ABUSE

Texas leads the nation in reforming its lawsuit laws, but ranks in the bottom 10 – 42nd – for stopping abusive legal practices that have spawned “judicial hellholes” in parts of the state, a new report finds. The study by the Pacific Research Institute of the tort liability systems in the 50 states was released today in Washington, D.C., by the American Justice Partnership (www.AmericanJusticePartnership.org).

The report’s findings underscore the lawsuit abuse problems that continue to fester in parts of Texas, said Bill Summers, founder and president of the country’s first Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (CALA) group in Weslaco.

“Texas has passed landmark lawsuit reforms and given birth to the leading, citizen-driven movement to stop lawsuit abuse,” Summers said. “Yet as this new report emphasizes even with good law, Texas continues to be weighed down by rogue courts that tolerate jackpot justice and thumb their nose at lawsuit reform. These courts continue to levy multi-million – and even billion – dollar verdicts and hand down rulings that fly in the face of the law, not to mention common sense.”

“As long as judges in our state continue to allow some greedy personal injury lawyers to play our courts like a lawsuit lottery, our state’s reputation as the country’s lawsuit abuse poster child will live on,” Summers said. “Judicial hellholes are sucker punching the rest of the state – and giving Texas a shiner that signals to the rest of the world that justice here is still not evenly applied.”

In December 2005, the American Tort Reform Association (ATRA) listed the Rio Grande Valley and Texas Gulf Coast as the nation’s top two “judicial hellholes” or places where uneven justice and questionable rulings by courts are routine. This report may be found at www.atra.org.

In its report, ATRA found that judges here and in other judicial hellholes are more apt to approve legal theories so novel that plaintiffs do not even have to be injured to receive “damages.” Class actions are certified regardless of the commonality of claims. And defendants are named in lawsuits, not because they may be culpable, but because they have deep pockets.

Founded in the Valley in 1990, the CALA movement is dedicated to making the public better aware of the cost and consequences of lawsuit abuse. More than 25,000 Texans now support the movement. For more information, visit www.tala.com.