

Victims Project Will Help Build Case For Reform

By Dan Pero

IF YOU HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF LAWSUIT ABUSE, YOU KNOW THE ENORMOUS EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL TOLL IT TAKES ON YOUR LIFE – THE MONEY SPENT ON DEFENSE LAWYERS, TIME AWAY FROM WORK, FRAYED CUSTOMER RELATIONS AND EMPLOYEE MORALE, NOT TO MENTION NIGHTS WITHOUT SLEEP WORRYING ABOUT WHETHER YOU’LL BE ABLE TO KEEP WHAT YOU’VE WORKED SO HARD TO BUILD.

But now, a new project developed by the American Justice Partnership is aimed at using that bad experience to generate something good. This article explains how.

For more than 40 years, plaintiff lawyers have spent tens of millions of dollars to convince the American public that all the lawsuits they are filing against you and other job providers are simply meant to protect average citizens. Using scare tactics and “junk” science, the plaintiff lawyers have fought for changes to make it easier to file lawsuits. Too often, the American public sees only one side of the story.

In an effort to provide the public with a more accurate picture of abusive litigation, the American Justice Partnership (AJP) has launched the

Victims Project. This nationwide effort is aimed at collecting verified examples of lawsuit abuse against job providers, charitable organizations and others to share with the media, academic researchers and lawmakers.

The AJP, a national legal reform organization affiliated with the National Association of Manufacturers, is coordinating this project with the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and its other partners across the United States. As your business advocate, the

one percent of GDP in Japan, France, Canada, and the UK. True, but hardly compelling. It’s another thing, and many would argue more compelling to the average citizen, to be able to point out that the Girl Scouts of Metro Detroit must sell 32,000 boxes of cookies each year to pay for the liability insurance in case they are sued.

Nobody understands this better than Beth Thieme, Executive Vice President of Amigo Mobility International, Inc., located in Bridgeport,

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Michigan Chamber is taking this bold step to fight those who would roll back the legal reform gains won in the 1990s and turn your future over to the trial lawyers.

Associations working on your behalf have the statistics they need to support common sense legal reform, but they need compelling stories, too – the kind of stories that only you can tell. It’s one thing to say that America has the most expensive tort system in the world, costing \$246 billion a year, or 2.23 percent of GDP, compared to less than

Michigan. In the mid-1990s when legal reform advocates were searching for ways to explain how lawsuit abuse was harming Michigan’s economy, Beth traveled to Lansing to give legislators a first-hand account of how her family-owned company had been the victim of meritless lawsuits.


Beth stood up to the plaintiff lawyers and spoke effectively about the impact frivolous lawsuits had on Amigo’s ability to compete in the worldwide marketplace and to provide jobs for Michigan families. The Legislature subsequently

passed, and then Governor John Engler signed into law, reforms that have led to a much-improved and more predictable legal climate in Michigan. Those reforms are under attack by plaintiff lawyers and their allies in the legislature, and again, they are using stories of victims to tell only one side of the story.

State lawmakers need to hear the truth about abusive litigation, and your experiences can make a difference in the continuing battle for legal reform! Victims of lawsuit abuse include the following:

- Employees of companies bankrupted by asbestos lawsuits who lost their jobs and/or investments.
- Small business owners who were forced out of business or who had to remove consumer products from the market because of abusive lawsuits.
- Small companies that cannot obtain insurance on current or new products because of lawsuit abuse.

Protect your livelihood. Don't let a trial lawyer or a meritless lawsuit ruin your business, your family or your life.

If you have a story, please go to www.AmericanJusticePartnership.org and click on the purple box that says: "Lawsuit Abuse Victim?" You'll find a simple questionnaire you can use to share your experience. Thank you for taking a few moments to tell your story. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dan Pero is President of the American Justice Partnership, a nationwide coalition to advocate for legal reform at the state level.