



# Keeping the courthouse doors OPEN

By J. Kent Emison

Access to the civil justice system is one of the fundamental rights identified by our Founding Fathers as inalienable and endowed by our Creator. Yet these rights are constantly under attack from large corporate interests who would shift their responsibility to their victims or to taxpayers through Medicare, Medicaid, and assistance programs.

## AAJ Update

In 2010, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce pledged \$75 million to elect pro-corporate, anti-justice politicians to enact “reforms” like caps on damages, immunity, federal pre-emption, and other anti-justice measures.

The American Association for Justice (AAJ) is one of the few (perhaps only) organizations battle-tested and ready to fight for our clients and uphold the principles of American civil justice. Through AAJ and AAJ PAC, the American Association for Justice is:

- Fighting tort reform in HR 5
- Fighting preemption amendments giving de facto immunity to corporations
- Worked with the Department of Health and Human Services to initiate a one-year moratorium on reporting requirements for Medicare Second Payer (MSP) claims involving liability insurance
- Supporting initiatives to streamline the MSP process, including finality and certainty for reimbursement to the Medicare Trust Fund
- Supporting civil justice in states, including Missouri, through entities like the Center for Constitutional Litigation
- Supporting pro-civil justice candidates nation-wide

AAJ plays a crucial role in protecting access to the courts and ensuring that those responsible for causing injuries are not permitted to shift their costs to victims or taxpayers. AAJ works to ensure that there are no federal or state bailouts for negligent conduct, but the work is daunting. In 2011 alone, more than 50 bills in the U.S. Congress have included anti-civil justice elements.

If you are not an AAJ member, please consider becoming a member. If you are an AAJ member, please consider supporting AAJ PAC.

Trial lawyers must unite to support the civil justice system. It is imperative that we lend our individual voices to the collective voice of AAJ as it fights every day to preserve the rights of our clients. It has been my honor to serve as an AAJ PAC trustee.

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