



PO Box 65172  
Baton Rouge, LA 70806  
1 (888) 284 LLAW  
[www.LLAW.org](http://www.LLAW.org)

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## **Citizen Watchdog Group Launches “Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week”**

**BATON ROUGE-** Louisiana Lawsuit Abuse Watch (LLAW) announced today that next week, November 1- 7, 2009 is “Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week,” an annual commemoration to raise awareness about the high cost of frivolous lawsuits.

“Excessive civil litigation in our country costs individuals, businesses and our courts billions of dollars each year,” said Melissa Landry, Executive Director of LLAW, the state’s leading grassroots legal watchdog group. “Lawsuit abuse hurts workers and families, causing lost jobs and higher consumer prices. While some personal injury lawyers seem to encourage meritless claims in hopes of getting lucrative settlements for themselves, it’s important that we all know that when it comes to lawsuit abuse—no matter who wins, we all pay.”

In recognition of the week, LLAW is calling upon all citizens to do their part to help safeguard our civil justice system for those who truly need it and help keep meritless claims out of our courts.

In addition the many other adverse effects that it has on our legal system, lawsuit abuse can also detract from our communities by diverting much-needed state and local resources away from important municipal services, public safety programs and schools.

“Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week serves as an opportunity to bring these issues to the forefront and educate citizens about what they can do to help,” LLAW board member Dr. Elisa Arrillaga. “From serving on a jury, to contacting your elected officials in support much-needed reforms, to being an active voter, especially in judicial elections—everyone has a role to play in the fight against lawsuit abuse.”

Many national groups have rated Louisiana's court system as lacking fairness. A 2008 study conducted by the non-partisan global market research firm Harris Interactive ranked Louisiana as second worst in the nation for legal fairness, and the American Tort Reform Association has labeled areas of the state as "judicial hellholes" for a lack of objectivity and fairness.

“Clearly, Louisiana’s reputation as a magnet for personal injury lawyers is costing our state jobs and opportunities,” Landry continued. “If we are ever going to get them back, we need to follow the lead of our neighbors in Texas and Mississippi and demand that our Legislature pass comprehensive reforms that will help restore fairness to our legal system.”

A recent study by The Perryman Group found that legal reforms have strengthened Texas’ economy and created jobs. According to their report, approximately 8.5 percent of Texas’ economic growth since 1995 is the result of lawsuit reforms. And, while many states, including Louisiana, are suffering with weak economies and huge deficits in the wake of the national recession, Texas ranks as the top state in the nation for doing business.

Similarly, Mississippi has experienced dramatic economic growth since transforming itself from a “judicial hellhole” to a job magnet nearly four years ago. Under the leadership of Governor Haley Barbour, Mississippi enacted comprehensive reforms which lead to the creation of more than 60,000 new jobs, dramatic cuts in medical malpractice insurance for doctors and lower unemployment rates.

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*Louisiana Lawsuit Abuse Watch is a non-partisan, non-profit, citizen watchdog group dedicated to stopping lawsuit abuse that hurts Louisiana families and threatens our jobs and health care. Learn more at [www.LLAW.org](http://www.LLAW.org), or follow us on Twitter at: [www.twitter.com/ReformLouisiana](https://www.twitter.com/ReformLouisiana).*