



LAWSUIT ABUSE

Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 17, 2014

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What We're Watching for in 2014

Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse Keeping Watchdog Eyes on Courts, Legislature and Candidates

AUSTIN, TEXAS—Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse (TALA), the leading lawsuit abuse watchdog in the state, continues its efforts to educate the public about the costs and consequences of lawsuit abuse, as well as the benefits of smart-minded legal reforms. To start the year off right, TALA is highlighting the priority issues that the group and its members statewide will focus on for 2014.

“From patent trolls to lawsuit lending reform, TALA is focused on a wide range of issues that directly impact our civil justice system and our economy,” said Jon Smiley, a TALA board member. “We know that legal reform has worked for Texas – and is a leading reason we continue to lead the nation in job creation and business growth – but we can’t rest in the ongoing battle to ensure our courts are used for justice, not greed. We need to make sure that voters are informed when they serve on juries throughout the year and head to the voter booth this fall.”

TALA’s priority issues for 2014 include:

Progress on Patent Trolls

East Texas has become a hotbed for a booming patent industry, where innovators can protect their intellectual property because of the speed and access to local courts.

Unfortunately, patent trolls have created a cottage industry to prey on these innovators and file abusive lawsuits. Lt. Governor David Dewhurst directed the Texas Senate to study the issue for a possible legislative fix in 2015.

“We’ll be watching the outcome of these hearings on patent trolling,” said Diane Davis, with East Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse (ETALA) in Longview. “It’s an issue, that if not quickly and comprehensively addressed, could be detrimental to the state’s rapidly expanding tech sector and our larger economy.”

Lawsuit Lender Lookout

Lawsuit lending remains a wholly unregulated industry, not beholden to the same consumer-friendly protections of traditional bank lenders. While efforts to reform this industry sector failed in the 2013 Legislative Session, TALA is optimistic that lawmakers will take up the issue again in 2015.

“Lawsuit lenders prey on people when they are at their most vulnerable by offering loans to back litigation with extremely high and unregulated interest rates,” said Jill Shackelford, with Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (CALA) of Central Texas in Austin. “Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse urge Texans who have been abused by this industry to speak up and fight back against lawsuit lenders this year.”

Vote Smart

This election year, TALA is urging voters to know their candidates’ positions on key issues, especially related to lawsuit reform, including lawsuit lending regulation and patent trolling.

“We want to make sure voters ask the important questions to know what their candidates support and who is supporting them,” said Connie Scott with Bay Area CALA in Corpus Christi.

Talk the talk and walk the walk

While Texas voters believe it’s important that we answer the call to serve on a jury, the numbers show that while we talk the talk, we don’t always walk the walk. Many juror summons simply go straight into the trash. TALA will use 2014 to continue to educate Texans about the importance of serving on a jury.

Even with Texas’ strong record on reforms, the state continues to see ridiculous lawsuits and questionable legal antics in jurisdictions across the state. To ensure we have a fair and balanced legal system in Texas, we need to all be proactive about curbing lawsuit abuse – calling out abuse as we see it and keeping an eye on the courts, legislators and candidates.

“We’re working to make sure that Texas courts are fair and that Texas stays open for business,” added Febe Zepeda with the Rio Grande Valley CALA in Weslaco.

For information on how you can help fight lawsuit abuse, stay connected with us online at www.tala.com or find us on Facebook and Twitter.

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