



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**

*Lesley Smith, PA Chamber, 717 720-5446*

*Julie Kissinger, HAP, 717 561-5378*

*Kevin Shivers, NFIB, 717 571-0009*

**GROUP SEEKING TO END  
LAWSUIT ABUSE URGES  
LAWMAKERS TO ENACT LEGAL  
REFORM**

**Harrisburg (Feb. 10, 2011)** -- A coalition of organizations representing the full spectrum of employers in Pennsylvania is urging lawmakers to pass commonsense legal reform to eliminate predatory lawsuits that destroy jobs, businesses and the state’s economic competitiveness.

The group includes 44 organizations that say lawsuit abuse is a major impediment to Pennsylvania’s economic growth. Not only does it destroy jobs and opportunities for Pennsylvanians, but it leads to higher consumer prices, insurance premiums and taxes.

The coalition sent a [letter](#) this week to legislators urging them to adopt commonsense reforms that would protect businesses, manufacturers, retailers and taxpayers from the kind of jackpot justice for which Pennsylvania is fast developing a negative reputation.

“A state’s legal climate has a direct bearing on job creation; the cost of goods and services; and the cost and availability of health care, and greatly impacts business decisions, such as where to locate or expand, and even what products to introduce or improve. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania’s unbalanced legal system threatens all of these,” wrote the group.

Foremost among the reforms sought is re-enactment of the Fair Share Act, which would ensure that damages paid by defendants in civil liability cases are more proportional to actual degree of fault.

“The inefficient and unfair legal doctrine of joint and several liability holds every defendant found even 1 percent liable in a lawsuit responsible for the entire verdict, and encourages more litigation as plaintiffs search for ‘deep pockets’ when filing their lawsuits,” the group pointed out. “Often, these deep pockets end up paying the entire award even if they were only marginally responsible.”

The coalition noted that the Fair Share act passed the General Assembly twice before, only to be overturned by the state Supreme Court once on a technicality and then vetoed by former Gov. Ed Rendell on another occasion. With new leadership in both houses of the Legislature and a new governor whose campaign platform featured lawsuit abuse reform, the group hopes that this time will be different.

“Your leadership on these issues moving forward will send a clear message that Pennsylvania wants its communities, citizens, employers and health-care providers to realize the benefits of a legal system that is fair to all,” said the group in its letter. “Your support will also send a signal that the Commonwealth is serious about attracting and retaining high-quality, family-sustaining jobs.”

###