Illinois Coalition for LEGAL REFORM

Illinois Needs Tort Reform Now

The tort system is the legal system that provides businesses and individuals with the means to obtain civil remedies for harm caused by others in the form of monetary damages and penalties. While the tort system is designed to provide justice for real harm, it is often abused, causing tort costs across the country and in Illinois to skyrocket.

In 2022, tort costs paid in Illinois totaled more than $21 million and accounted for 2.1% of the state's GDP. Costs have increased 7.4% over a six-year period, and will only continue to rise and hurt Illinois families and businesses unless lawmakers commit to meaningful reforms.

It Burdens Hardworking Families and Businesses

Illinois ranks among the highest in the nation for per-household tort costs. The tort burden per household in Illinois is $4,281 annually, taking money directly from the pockets of hard-working families. Not only that, but ongoing abuse of the system can keep those who are actually in need of compensation from receiving it.

Tort system abuse also creates an uncertain and unequitable environment for businesses, potentially deterring them from choosing Illinois to as a site for future projects and inhibiting job creation.

It's Often Exploited

The tort system is broken, so plaintiffs' lawyers often focus on exploiting it. These lawyers may file abusive lawsuits, use deceptive advertising, or involve third-party funders who finance the litigation but reduce the plaintiffs' recoveries. This exploitation turns a system meant to compensate injured parties into a tool for personal gain, often at the expense of those it was designed to protect.

It's Inefficient

The tort system is often considered inefficient because a significant portion of the money paid into the system goes towards legal fees and administrative costs, meaning only a fraction of the total funds actually reach the injured party. This means high overall costs for both plaintiffs and defendants while not always effectively compensating victims. The problem is only made worse by the complexities of litigation, including unpredictable jury verdicts.