

For years, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has actively tried to prevent Americans from receiving justice when injured by defective products, fraudulent services and dangers at work. Ironically, one way the Chamber pushes this agenda is by engaging in litigation.

The Chamber has two affiliated organizations that focus on litigation: the Institute for Legal Reform (ILR) advocates for restrictions on lawsuits brought against corporate members, while the National Chamber Litigation Center (NCLC) engages in litigation to limit regulations and give complete immunity to these companies.

TOM DONOHUE'S LOVE OF LITIGATION

- Donohue has admitted to using litigation to bully politicians, saying, "We'll try to influence [them], we'll try to persuade them, we'll lobby them, and if they don't listen, then we are going to sue them."
- Donohue has used the Chamber to defend corporations in which he has a personal interest, including AIG and Qwest Communications.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

The Chamber has fought workers' rights by litigating to:

- force workers to pay for their own safety equipment;
- defend corporations that discriminate on the basis of disability or race;
- oppose measures allowing workers to receive a rest period during a full work day;
- and contest safety standards that would limit workers' exposure to toxic substances.

TOXIC SUBSTANCES

The Chamber has litigated to immunize corporations that knowingly exposed Americans to toxic substances, including:

- lead paint manufacturers whose products have poisoned thousands of children;
- corporations that used asbestos and hid its dangers from workers and consumers;
- and corporations that knowingly polluted the environment with toxic substances.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Chamber has tried to prevent the government from regulating greenhouse gas emissions by litigating to:

- prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from regulating greenhouse gases;
- prevent states from regulating auto emissions;
- and prevent polar bears from being listed as an endangered species whose habitat is threatened by climate change.
- The Chamber has also used litigation to stifle a critic of the organization's stance on climate change, suing activists just two days before the ILR held its annual Legal Reform Summit in 2009.

FOREIGN ATROCITIES

The Chamber has defended corporations accused of committing atrocities, including:

- filing an amicus brief supporting an American pharmaceutical company that tested a drug on Nigerian children, that was linked to the deaths of 11;
- and defending corporations accused of aiding and abetting Apartheid.

TOBACCO

The Chamber has proved to be a consistent ally of the tobacco industry by litigating to:

- prevent people injured or killed by tobacco products and their families from recovering punitive damages, even though the industry actively hid tobacco's dangers from consumers for decades;
- and prevent the tobacco industry from being held accountable for decades of deceptive marketing.

WALL STREET

Despite the economic crises of the past decade, the Chamber has defended Wall Street and used litigation to fight regulations that would prevent such collapses in the future by:

- suing the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) over reforms put into place following the accounting scandals of Enron, WorldCom, Tyco and others;
- and suing the SEC over regulations passed in response to the financial crisis that started in 2008 with the bailout of AIG, the Chamber's longtime friend and supporter.
- While the Chamber sued to keep Wall Street from being regulated, it also fought to prevent Americans who lost their savings from holding banks accountable.