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IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PHARMA/INSURANCE INDUSTRY SUMMIT

MESSAGE #1 of 4: PACKAGE CORPORATE BAILOUTS AS "LEGAL REFORM"

HARRISBURG -- Fear, not facts, at today's Legal Reform Summit at the Harrisburg Crowne Plaza sets the stage for a gloomy forecast of Pennsylvania business. Corporate special interests blame a phony blizzard of lawsuits on tort lawyers in an effort to avoid their responsibility to compensate Pennsylvanians injured by their dangerous products and negligence. But the explosion in lawsuits is fueled by businesses-on-business contractual disputes, not tort cases.

Yet Big Business wants to pass the buck to injured people and Pennsylvania taxpayers. Proposals today would minimize the ability of people injured by corporate malfeasance to obtain justice. It's another corporate bailout that won't bring a single job to Pennsylvania.

There is no blizzard of tort lawsuits. Today's Summit participants cite bogus studies and use distortions and hyperbole to convince you there is. This is fear, not facts.

The facts are that cases filed by tort attorneys are down, tort trials are down, and the average number of tort verdicts is down.

- According to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, medical malpractice cases filed in Philadelphia are down nearly 60%. Yet the Institute of Medicine reports 98,000 patient deaths a year due to preventable errors.
- The number of tort cases filed continues to decline, according to statistics from the Conference of State Court Administrators, while contract disputes are on the rise.

Big business should tell the truth that it wants another bailout. If Wall Street's behavior has taught us anything, it's that transparency and accountability are essential to a healthy economy. The health and safety of Pennsylvania families is never an acceptable cost of doing business.

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