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MESSAGE #3 of 4: RED LIGHT JUSTICE FOR PA MOTORISTS

HARRISBURG – A bogus study that uses junk science, distortions and hyperbole to slam our court system is being offered up by Mark Behrens of the American Tort Reform Association (ATRA) as the basis to rewrite Pennsylvania’s law on venue in personal injury cases.

Venue refers to the court where a claim can be filed. Today’s Summit participants want to restrict venue rules to make it harder on injured people to obtain justice. Consider an Erie motorist who is seriously injured in Bucks County by a tractor trailer owned by a company with offices across the state. Today’s summit participants want to force the motorists to travel from Erie to Bucks for the multiple hearings, meetings, and trial. But under current law the playing field is level: the Erie motorist can attempt to have venue in Erie and the Bucks defendant can challenge the venue. But giving the Erie motorist no chance to try the case in Erie unfairly stacks the deck in favor of the negligent trucking company. To borrow for Mr. Behrens’ analogy, it would be like your grammar school team playing the Pittsburgh Steelers at Heinz Field.

ATRA is funded by Philip Morris, Dow Chemical, Exxon, General Electric, Aetna, Geico, State Farm, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and Nationwide – a “who’s who” of corporations with the most to gain by shifting the costs of injury away from those responsible and onto injured people and taxpayers. Its infamous study of so-called “judicial hellholes” smeared the names of judges who operate the Complex Litigation Center in Philadelphia. These judges have been successful in reducing backlogs of claims resulting in faster resolutions for cases benefitting both plaintiffs and defendants.

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