

Opening the Floodgates For Lawsuits Good For Trial Lawyers, Bad For Michigan, Says Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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Repealing state law designed to end frivolous lawsuits against drug makers would be a step backward for the state of Michigan, do little to protect consumers and do much to line the pockets of personal injury lawyers, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce announced today in response to a legislative proposal unveiled yesterday by State Representative Dianne Byrum (D-Onondaga) in the Michigan House.

"In 1996, Michigan took a step toward fairness with a law that raised the standard for when a drug company can be sued," said Wendy Hofmeyer, Director of Health Policy & Human Resources for the Michigan Chamber. "House Bill 4773, introduced by Rep. Byrum, would take Michigan's lawsuit abuse environment backward and hurt the state's efforts to improve its business climate.

"The U.S. Food & Drug Administration has the safest drug approval process in the world," noted Hofmeyer. "Drug companies are required to spend years testing new medicines, and their data and manufacturing processes are fully reviewed and approved by federal regulators. Fewer than three percent of approved prescription medicines have been withdrawn from the market over the last 20 years. Of the more than 10,000 prescription medicines on the market, the vast majority are working well and helping patients live productive, healthier lives.

"Rep. Byrum's drastic approach to repealing Michigan's drug liability reforms would make Michigan a liability lawsuit magnet," added Hofmeyer. "Other states that don't provide the liability protections have been inundated by frivolous lawsuits and advertisements trying to recruit plaintiffs. The result has been an enormous burden on the legal system and on businesses, large and small.

"Repeal of Michigan's drug liability law would do nothing to protect businesses against the waste and burden of frivolous lawsuits. Michigan's law is an example of forward thinking reform that other states have modeled and that Michigan ought to build upon, not dismantle," Hofmeyer concluded.

The Michigan Chamber is a statewide business organization which represents more than 6,500 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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