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U. S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

NEWS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER



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## PRODUCT LIABILITY REFORM VETO

PRESIDENT'S VETO OF MUCH-NEEDED, BIPARTISAN REFORM CONFIRMS  
TRIAL LAWYERS ARE CALLING THE SHOTS AT THE WHITE HOUSE;  
LAWSUIT ABUSE HURTS CONSUMERS, JOBS,  
U.S. COMPETITIVENESS & LIFE-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Later this afternoon, President Clinton is expected to veto the product liability reform bill -- a bipartisan measure to curb abusive, predatory lawsuits.

This bill passed the Congress overwhelmingly, with the support of Democrats and Republicans alike. And for good reason: in 1994, lawsuits cost the American consumer a staggering \$152 billion -- a price tag that exceeds the entire federal budget deficit.

Lawsuit abuse hurts consumers by raising the costs of goods and services. It limits employment opportunities for those seeking jobs. It hurts the competitiveness of U.S. businesses overseas. And, perhaps worst of all, it can prevent new, life-saving drugs and medical devices from ever reaching the market.

As Linda Ransom of Phoenix, Arizona explained to us earlier this week, abusive lawsuits have forced manufacturers to stop selling the materials that are needed to make the medical device that is keeping her 9 year-old daughter, Tara, alive. This is truly a life-and-death issue.

It is time to stop lawsuit abuse before lawsuit abuse stops America.

So, why will President Clinton veto this important legislation? The answer can be summed up in three words: the trial lawyers. President Clinton vetoed the securities litigation reform bill because of the strong-arm tactics of the trial lawyers. And he will veto the product liability bill because he believes what's good for the trial lawyers is also good for America.

America's legal system is broken and fundamental reforms are needed -- and needed now. Our legal system must be reformed to encourage people to be responsible for their own actions. And it should quickly and efficiently compensate victims -- not lawyers. Quite simply, legal reform is a key ingredient of any serious plan to promote job creation and economic growth.

Unfortunately, with today's veto, the President will be confirming what we already suspected: it is the trial lawyers who are calling the shots at the White House.

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\*Remarks delivered from Senate floor, approximately 12:40 p.m.