



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD DESTROY CLASS ACTIONS AND HARM ASBESTOS VICTIMS**

New York, NY and Washington, DC – Two letters, with a combined total of nearly 70 national and state organizations, were sent today to the U.S. House of Representatives expressing strong opposition to legislation that would provide sweeping new liability protections to industries that harm the public. The bill, H.R. 1927, is expected to reach the House floor for debate and vote this Friday, January 8, 2016.

Each letter addresses once separate bills now combined as different sections in this legislation. Section 2 of the bill, say the organizations, would “effectively eviscerate consumer, employment and civil rights class actions.” Section 3 of the bill, say a number of groups, would “severely invade the privacy of asbestos victims and their families, and delay and deny justice to people suffering from lethal asbestos-related diseases.” Organizations signing the letters include a broad array of prominent consumer, civil rights, immigration, labor, environmental, health, food and product safety, employment, housing, senior citizen, children’s, low-income and legal services organizations, among others.

According to Joanne Doroshow, Executive Director of the Center for Justice & Democracy, “H.R. 1927 combines two bills, which have nothing in common except for their overall purpose to block victims access to the courts and eliminate legal accountability for corporations engaged in wrongdoing. One bill would wipe out federal class actions. The second would block asbestos victims from accessing the courts while violating their privacy.”

Kyle Barry, Director of Justice Programs at Alliance for Justice, said the bill “is nothing more than a corporate bailout at the expense of everyday Americans. In one stroke, this bill seeks to immunize powerful corporate wrongdoers and cut off access to justice for victims of widespread harm and asbestos-related illness—some of the most vulnerable people in our country.”

“This bill would end nearly all federal class action lawsuits, which are brought when a company practices a pattern of discrimination or receives a large windfall through small injuries to large numbers of people,” said CJ&D’s Joanne Doroshow. “Because class actions allow people to band together to challenge wrongdoing, they are among the most important tools that harmed, cheated and violated individuals have to hold large corporations accountable and deter future misconduct. This legislation would wipe out one of the most important tools for justice in America.”

Doroshow continued, “Asbestos kills between 3,000 and 15,000 people annually, and many die within months of being diagnosed with asbestos disease. This bill will delay compensation for no reason, so many victims will die before families are compensated. It would also require posting private information about their lives on public websites, making them vulnerable to crooks and identify thieves. The asbestos industry lied for decades about the harm caused by asbestos, fought against liability for the harms caused, tried to change the laws that held them responsible and, to this day, fight against banning asbestos in the U.S. This legislation is nothing but another industry attempt to torment victims and avoid responsibility for the grave harms they have caused.”

**A copy of the group class action letter is [here](https://www.centerjd.org/content/group-letter-congress-opposing-hr-1927-class-action-and-asbestos-bill).** <https://www.centerjd.org/content/group-letter-congress-opposing-hr-1927-class-action-and-asbestos-bill>

**A copy of the group asbestos letter is [here](http://www.afj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/House-Floor-Coalition-SignOn-Opposing-FACTAct-January-2016.pdf).** <http://www.afj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/House-Floor-Coalition-SignOn-Opposing-FACTAct-January-2016.pdf>

In addition, two other group letters were sent opposing the asbestos bill.

A copy of the letter from privacy groups is [here](http://www.citizen.org/documents/ProtectVictimPrivacy-Oppose-Sec3-HR1927.pdf).  
<http://www.citizen.org/documents/ProtectVictimPrivacy-Oppose-Sec3-HR1927.pdf>

A copy of the letter from occupational safety and health groups is [here](http://www.citizen.org/documents/Labor-Occupational-Health-Groups-Oppose-FACT-Act.pdf).  
<http://www.citizen.org/documents/Labor-Occupational-Health-Groups-Oppose-FACT-Act.pdf>

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