

**For Release
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Prominent Scholars Join Forces to Counter Civil Justice System Critics

New Group Responding to Heightened Interest in Tort Issues

For the first time, nearly twenty scholars from law and graduate schools around the country have formed a "Civil Justice Resource Group" (CJRG) to respond to the widespread disinformation campaign by critics of the civil justice system.

According to Richard W. Wright, professor at the Chicago-Kent College of Law and former chair of the Tort and Insurance Law Section of the Association of American Law Schools, "Those who attack the civil justice system increasingly rely on misleading anecdotes and inaccurate information while ignoring the results of objective empirical studies that contradict almost all of their claims. The disinformation campaign is currently being raised to an even higher level in response to the selection of a former trial lawyer as the Democratic candidate for Vice-President. We hope the CJRG becomes the first place that news organizations, opinion leaders and lawmakers turn to for accurate information about one of the most cherished and important institutions in America, the civil justice system."

"As an academic researcher who studies the tort system, and who has testified before federal and state legislatures on tort reform issues, it has often disturbed me how uninformed legislators are about the realities of the tort system, and how much misinformation opponents of the civil justice system feed them," said Lucinda Finley, Professor of Trial and Appellate Advocacy at the University of Buffalo Law School. "The aim of the Civil Justice Resource Group is to correct this situation, to insure that important policy decisions are based on sound, impartial research."

The CJRG is composed of leading academics with expertise in one or more issues related to the U.S. civil justice system. Several members of the group specialize in conducting empirical studies of the actual operation and effects of the civil justice system. The CJRG intends to publish briefing books and other materials to help inform the debate over these issues.

One of the areas the CJRG intends to cover is the national debate over medical malpractice. Explained Joseph D. Harbaugh, Dean and Professor of Law at Nova Southeastern University's law school, "Doctors, their liability insurers, and politicians seeking to make easy points, are once again trying to blame recent sharp increases in doctors' liability insurance premiums on the civil justice system rather than on insurance pricing practices that fail to smooth over investment cycles, lax regulation of doctors and their liability insurers, and medical errors generated by the increasingly bureaucratic nature of medical treatment."

It should be noted that while the group has come together under the auspices of the Center for Justice & Democracy, their views are objective and independent of CJ&D's. However, each participant has indicated support for CJ&D's mission of educating the public about the value and importance of the civil justice system.

Members of the media can learn more about each member of the group, including profiles and contact information, by contacting Geoff Boehm, Legal Director of the Center for Justice and Democracy, at 212-267-2801 or centerjd@centerjd.org. The following list includes current members of the CJRG; other scholars have expressed an interest in joining the group, and an updated list of participants is available from CJ&D.

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Members of the Civil Justice Resource Group

Carl T. Bogus

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Andrea A. Curcio*

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Richard A. Daynard

Professor of Law & Associate Dean for
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