



WISCONSIN CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL, INC.

Promoting Fairness and Equity in Wisconsin's Civil Justice System

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Legal Reforms Mean Business for Wisconsin

Legislature Passes First Walker Jobs Bill

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Madison – The first of Governor Walker’s bills to restore Wisconsin’s economy passed the Legislature today. Senate Bill 1 will return Wisconsin to the mainstream of states by returning fairness to our civil justice system.

“These legal reforms will demonstrate to the nation that Governor Walker is serious about making Wisconsin competitive,” said James Buchen, Vice President of the Wisconsin Civil Justice Council and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, the state chamber of commerce. “The first bill through the Legislature proves Wisconsin is open for business.”

Buchen noted that there were features of Wisconsin's liability laws that have exposed our businesses to risks they would not face in any other state in the nation. Passage of the Walker reforms will mean businesses won't have to be afraid to come to Wisconsin.

Earlier in the week, the Wisconsin Civil Justice Council announced a broad coalition of over 30 businesses and associations representing thousands of Wisconsin businesses and hundreds of thousands of workers supporting the civil justice reforms the Legislature passed tonight.

“The Wisconsin Civil Justice Council appreciates the work of Governor Walker the authors, Senator Zipperer and Representative Ott, and the legislative committees who devoted many hours to hearings and consideration of this legislation,” said Buchen.

Gov.-elect Walker’s proposals include:

- Adoption of more reasonable product liability standards for manufacturers and sellers; Wisconsin is currently **one of only four states** using the harmful “consumer contemplation test” in product liability cases.
- Elimination of the deeply flawed “risk contribution” theory in manufacturing lawsuits; Wisconsin is currently **the only state** with the *Thomas* “risk contribution” doctrine.
- Elimination of junk science in the courtroom and adoption of sound science principles relating to expert opinion evidence; Wisconsin is currently **one of only 15 states** that have not adopted the sound science

Daubert principles.

- Adoption of caps on punitive damages (\$200,000 or two times compensatory damages, whichever is greater) in order to rein in abusive lawsuits.
- Sanctions on frivolous lawsuits; Restores to prior law before the Wisconsin Supreme Court amended it.

Organizations supporting the legislation include:

American Petroleum Institute

Associated General Contractors of Wisconsin

Cooperative Network Association

Independent Insurance Agents of Wisconsin

Midwest Food Processors Association

Midwest Equipment Dealers Association

Ministry Health Care

National Federation of Independent Business

Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin

Residential Services Association of Wisconsin

Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative

Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians

Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association

Wisconsin Bankers Association

Wisconsin Builders Association

Wisconsin Civil Justice Council

Wisconsin Defense Counsel

Wisconsin Economic Development Association

Wisconsin Grocers Association

Wisconsin Health Care Association

Wisconsin Hospital Association
Wisconsin Independent Businesses
Wisconsin Insurance Alliance
Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wisconsin Nurses Association
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association
Wisconsin Restaurant Association
Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association
Wisconsin Utility Investors, Inc.
Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association
Wisconsin Utilities Association

The Wisconsin Civil Justice Council, Inc. represents a coalition of Wisconsin business interests on civil liability issues before the Legislature. For more information, see www.WisCivilJusticeCouncil.org.