



PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN GALVANIZES AMERICANS IN FIGHT TO MAINTAIN THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO CIVIL JURY TRIALS

Consumers often forced to wave Seventh Amendment rights when accepting a job, receiving a doctor's care, activating a cell phone and countless other transactions

DALLAS, TX – January 12, 2015 – In recent years, powerful special interests have enjoyed unparalleled success in denying Americans access to justice through civil juries. To reverse this course, the American Board of Trial Advocates ([ABOTA](#)) has launched a public awareness program, [Save Our Juries](#). The campaign's goals are to educate Americans about the history and value of the Seventh Amendment, shed light on efforts to diminish this Constitutional right, and urge citizens to get involved in preserving the civil jury system.

"Special interests have waged war on our Seventh Amendment constitutional right to a civil jury trial. They attack the American juror and claim that the cost of this right to a civil jury trial is a wasteful expenditure. If they are successful, access to justice for the average American citizen will be drastically compromised," explained Mark P. Robinson, Jr., Chairman of Save Our Juries and 2014 National President of ABOTA.

Contracts routinely force individuals to give up their Seventh Amendment right before accepting a job, seeing a doctor, being treated in an emergency room, using a credit card, activating a cell phone, connecting to WiFi, opening a bank account, buying a car, hiring a builder, "liking" a social media platform and countless other forms of consumer transactions.

Save Our Juries presents user-friendly content including videos, infographics and articles that depict the problem and explain relevant legal concepts. The group advocates engagement with legislators and news media. On the [saveourjuries.org](#) website, links to federal representatives' offices and local editorial teams are available, along with sample letters demanding attention. Through its social media efforts, Save Our Juries shares information about the declining access to justice and the weakening of basic legal protections. It also engages other communities that are dedicated to reinstating equal bargaining power, as well as connecting to and influencing Congressional representatives to restore consumers' rights to seek justice in the courts.

The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to utilize a jury trial to resolve federal civil cases. All 50 states recognize this valuable right, as well. Impartial citizen jurors are thus empowered to provide justice as a dynamic exercise in self-governance which our Founding Fathers, in the words of Alexander Hamilton, deemed an essential "security against corruption" fundamental to American democracy. Yet self-serving groups have restricted a citizen's right to have a complaint resolved by a jury of their peers. Today, less than one half of one percent of all civil cases filed are decided by jury verdict. Civil jury trials have been replaced by arbitration proceedings, which are often secretive and cannot be appealed.

“Save Our Juries’ purpose is not to counter tort reform or eliminate arbitration,” said Mr. Robinson. “When all parties involved in a dispute purposefully agree to arbitration, the arbitration process is fair and effective. However, no one should be forced to give up the constitutional right to a civil jury trial.”

In addition to the mandatory arbitration issue, Save Our Juries also addresses the need for more citizens to participate in jury service and supports efforts to speed up the trial system.

“The two basic fundamental rights to our participatory democracy are the right to vote and the right to serve on a jury,” said Mr. Robinson. “Since jurors give up their time with their families and their work, the length of time for the civil jury trial can be made faster and shorter, all the while preserving the parties’ rights to be heard in the trial. This way we can be more sensitive to the personal rights of the jurors. If potential jurors appreciate that their service helps to preserve a precious right for their protection and are assured that the jury trial will only last for three or four days, they may be less likely to try to get out of jury duty. There has to be this balance and sensitivity going forward.”

About Save Our Juries

[Save Our Juries](#) is a proactive public awareness campaign created to educate the public about the vital importance of the Seventh Amendment. A robust website and active social media presence, including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Google+](#), will help educate followers about the issues impacting the civil jury process, and regular initiatives will encourage calls-to-action. Save Our Juries was established in 2014 by the American Board of Trial Advocates ([ABOTA](#)). Founded in 1958, ABOTA is a national association of experienced trial lawyers equally balanced between plaintiff and defense. For more information visit <http://saveourjuries.org>.

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