

Cartoons for the Classroom

Presented in cooperation with the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)



Between the lines

What the heck is a tort anyway? Tort law covers what happens when someone claims to have been harmed by someone else - for example, when a patient claims an injury caused by medical error. Advocates want to limit awards in court for damages to control the cost of doing business. Critics say this is just a way to protect businesses from having to pay for legitimate claims while sacrificing consumers' rights.

Cartoon courtesy Cox & Forkum

Tackling tort reform

Containing costs or giving up your rights. Those really are the two sides at issue in what's become known as tort reform. President Bush and the Republicans want to contain costs by limiting damages awarded in American courts and cut down on the number of frivolous lawsuits. By limiting claims in medical malpractice and product liability cases we'll all save money. But Democrats say this is just another way to shield the insurance companies from having to pay for mistakes made by their clients. What about your rights to recover when a company's actions cause you harm? It comes down to trial lawyers vs. insurance companies. Who is right? Which side of the argument do you agree with?

Get out your newspaper

Gather a collection of political cartoons from your newspaper over the next two weeks. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) analyze each cartoon and explain the issues addressed and determine the point of view of the artist. Gather news stories about those issues and evaluate the cartoonists opinions.

Talking points

1. The wounded tobacco figure is shouting a warning to the others in the pool. What happened to the tobacco industry?
2. Fast Food is the closest to the shark, making him the likely target for the shark. What makes the Fast Food industry vulnerable?
3. What lawsuits does the Pharmaceutical Industry face? What about the Auto Industry?
4. The trial lawyers are represented as a shark in the pool. The industries appear to be innocent victims. So whose side are the cartoonists on?
5. What's the other side of the issue? Do these industries deserve to get sued?

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

More from the Cox & Forkum Cartoon Weblog:
<http://coxandforkum.com/>