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Corzine and Christie Campaigns Address NJLRA's Membership Luncheon

Ranking legislators underscore their party's support for New Jersey's business community.

TRENTON, N.J. –A bipartisan group of lawmakers addressed an audience of business executives, attorneys, and trade associations, stressing their support of a fair business climate in New Jersey.

Speaking as surrogates for Governor Corzine and Candidate Christopher Christie, Assemblymen John McKeon (D-West Orange) and Jay Webber (R-Whippany) emphasized the importance of tempering the high cost of doing business in New Jersey. Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande, a member of the Assembly Judiciary Committee, expressed concern for New Jersey's ability to compete for the best medical professionals in a hostile litigation climate.

Assemblyman John McKeon highlighted Governor Corzine's decision last year to veto legislation now referred to as the "More Lawsuits, Higher Taxes" bill - which would have allowed for unlimited damages in wrongful death cases. The "More Lawsuits" legislation would have resulted in higher consumer costs, discouraged entrepreneurship, and likely placed additional stress on state and local budgets each time a government entity is named in a wrongful death suit.

"Our Governor understands legal costs place a burden on our business and that it is important to keep them down. That is why he vetoed legislation that could drive up costs for the medical community and insurance companies in New Jersey," McKeon said.

Assemblyman Jay Webber, speaking on behalf of the Christie Campaign, underscored the need to protect small business owners in a difficult economic climate. He noted that New Jersey's civil justice laws make it difficult for new businesses to thrive, and the constant threat of frivolous litigation makes stifles entrepreneurship.

"Lawsuit abuse in New Jersey costs \$7.7 billion each year or \$3,547 for a family of four," said Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande (R-Freehold), a member of the Assembly Judiciary Committee. "This type of massive overhead makes New Jersey unattractive for all types of businesses to locate here. Recently we've seen the pronounced impact of lawsuit abuse on the medical and pharmaceutical industries. It is imperative that the Legislature act to make NJ a leader in lawsuit reform."

"All of us pay the price for excessive litigation: taxpayers, who pay more when business flee the state, consumers, who pay for excessive awards through higher prices, and the businesses, sole proprietors, and organizations that expend so many resources trying to combat frivolous claims," said Marcus Rayner, the Executive Director of NJLRA. "It's very encouraging to have two candidates who are well acquainted with our concerns."

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The New Jersey Lawsuit Reform Alliance (NJLRA) is a statewide, bipartisan group of businesses, individuals and organizations committed to improving the State's civil justice system by advocating for legal reforms in the legislature and in the courts. NJLRA believes a balanced civil justice system is critical to ensuring fair and open courts, maintaining and attracting jobs and fostering economic growth in New Jersey. NJLRA is the only organization in New Jersey dedicated exclusively to civil justice reform.