



# COUNCIL *of* PRESIDENTS

*Working Together to Ensure Justice in America's Courtrooms*







## Welcome to the American Association for Justice's Council of Presidents!

For more than 70 years, the American Association for Justice has provided trial attorneys with information, professional support, and a network that enables them to effectively and expertly represent clients. AAJ promotes a fair and effective justice system and supports the work of attorneys in their efforts to ensure that any person injured by the misconduct or negligence of others can obtain justice.

AAJ's Council of Presidents is an important link between AAJ and each Trial Lawyer Association (TLA). Council membership includes the President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President of each state and provincial TLA. As a leader of your association and a member of the Council, you play a crucial role in fostering communication between AAJ and your TLA about mutual topics of interest and concern. AAJ relies on you to learn about ways we can continue to support your association and the entire trial lawyer community.

AAJ is your ally and here to provide you with the resources you need to be an effective leader of your association and active member of the Council of Presidents. AAJ staff is here to supply you with valuable information that will help you better understand AAJ's work and the tools available to support your association, your members, and your legislative efforts. Visit [www.justice.org/cop](http://www.justice.org/cop) for more information about AAJ.

As partners, there is nothing that we cannot accomplish together. We hope to make your time on the Council as productive as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Lipsen". The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style.

Linda Lipsen  
AAJ CEO



## The Council of Presidents

### SUMMARY AND ROLE

The Council of Presidents provides a forum for the exchange of ideas between AAJ and State and Provincial Trial Lawyer Association leaders. For example, past topics have included:

- A. Legislative issues and lobbying efforts
- B. Networking opportunities
- C. Fundraising activities
- D. Membership recruitment and retention
- E. Officer development
- F. Continuing legal education

Council members are also responsible for the continued flow of ideas between AAJ and their TLA regarding services and mutual topics of interest and concern. The Council of Presidents meets during the AAJ Annual Convention, the AAJ Winter Convention, and the Fall Meeting. The officers of the Council consist of a President, a President-Elect, and a Secretary. The Council receives notice of additional events, phone calls, and relevant information from AAJ via the Council of Presidents list server. As a member of the Council, you are automatically added to the list server. All Council members can email the list server at [tla.council@list.justice.org](mailto:tla.council@list.justice.org).



#### ***Did you know?***

*The Council of Presidents includes the President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President of each state and provincial trial lawyer association.*

*AAJ Bylaws and the Council of President's bylaws are available at [www.justice.org/COP](http://www.justice.org/COP).*

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# AAJ Leadership

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## AAJ OFFICERS

Six officers lead the American Association for Justice: President, President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian. Annual elections for AAJ National Officers occur at the Annual Convention. For a list of current officers visit [www.justice.org/who-we-are/leadership/officers](http://www.justice.org/who-we-are/leadership/officers).

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## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors is the governing body of the association, charged with establishing and approving association policies. Each affiliated state trial lawyer organization is represented on the Board by two or more Governors. Also, Governors are chosen by international jurisdictions and various caucuses, organizations, and groups within the association. The Board meets four times a year at the Annual and Winter Conventions and the Spring and Fall Meetings.

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## STATE DELEGATES

State Delegates are the primary liaisons between the Board of Governors and the TLAs. State Delegates assist the Board in attaining AAJ objectives and carrying out programs assigned to them by the AAJ President. In addition, the State Delegates focus on topics that advance the work of the association and strengthen the relationship between AAJ and TLAs. For the last few years, the State Delegates have focused on membership, recruitment, and retention.

### **Want an AAJ officer to attend your conventions?**

Officers can present CLEs or provide AAJ legislative and political updates. Tell us how we can support our partnership and encourage joint membership and involvement. Email Tricia Cooley, Director of State Affairs, at [patricia.cooley@justice.org](mailto:patricia.cooley@justice.org) to request an officer.

# AAJ's State Affairs Department

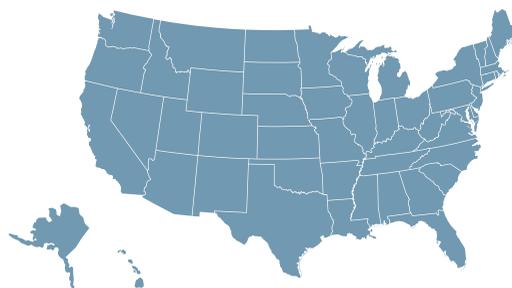
## SUPPORT YOU CAN COUNT ON

AAJ's State Affairs Department is the primary liaison between AAJ and each TLA. State Affairs helps with association issues and assists with legislative efforts.

State Affairs helps protect the civil justice system by providing legislative support to TLAs in their fights against anti-civil-justice legislation. We provide expert legal and legislative analysis, research, and multi-state bill tracking.

The department is your ally and is available to help states year-round.

The state legislatures are the primary battleground for national groups interested in pushing tort "reform." The State Affairs Department's numerous resources are available to members and TLA staff and cover a broad range of issues. For a sample list of topic areas visit [www.justice.org/COP](http://www.justice.org/COP).



### **Need assistance?**

Email [state.affairs@justice.org](mailto:state.affairs@justice.org)

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### **Emerging Issues**

AAJ staff keeps an ear to the ground for changes to social, technological, or business practices that could impact legislation and affect your practice. State Affairs, Public Affairs, and Research staff attend numerous national conventions, CLEs, and legislative and legal workshops to gather additional information on pending state and federal legislation and the priorities of national opposition groups. From robot cars to telemedicine, we strive to stay ahead of these emerging areas to fight off stealth tort reform and keep the courthouse doors open.

## RESEARCH, ANALYSIS, & SUPPORT

State Affairs provides a national perspective on state legislation and policy affecting the civil justice system. Our team analyzes legal trends, statutory language, and case law. We put legislation in context, explain legal effects and implications, flag preemption concerns, and identify conflicts with other states. Further, State Affairs can connect you and your TLA to our network of activists, subject matter experts, and federal legislative staff, who can assist with advocacy campaigns, provide additional background material, or explain the broader impact of the legislative issues.

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## TOOLKITS, TALKING POINTS, & FACT SHEETS

Anti-civil-justice legislation is increasingly shopped from state to state by several opposition groups. State Affairs helps TLAs keep up by prepackaging toolkits, talking points, and fact sheets. Our toolkits are comprehensive packets designed to help tackle legislation. They can include:

- ★ legislative histories,
- ★ fact sheets and talking points,
- ★ proposed legislative language or amendments,
- ★ supporting reports,
- ★ written testimony, and
- ★ sample communications material.

Legislative talking points are more streamlined point-by-point arguments for or against a policy change, and fact sheets provide a succinct analysis of a bill's pros or cons.

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## MULTI-STATE LEGISLATIVE TRACKING

State Affairs tracks issues in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to help maintain a broad understanding of pending civil justice issues. This multi-state legislative tracking is developed through emerging trend analysis. The department also monitors anti-civil-justice groups to determine where they plan to strike next with anti-plaintiff, bills. Tracking and trend analysis enables AAJ to proactively support states' legislative efforts.

## AAJ Research

AAJ Research is a valuable resource for public education and public policy materials, creating material on both federal and state legislative topics, analyzing data, tracking insurance trends, and helping predict upcoming issues. AAJ opposition researchers monitor the activities of tort reform proponents and track corporate and political spending. AAJ Research also prepares reports on issues of interest to trial attorneys, legislators, and the public. Recent reports explored robot cars and the future of automobile liability, forced arbitration, concussions, food safety, and women's health care products. These reports and more are available at [www.justice.org/research](http://www.justice.org/research).

In addition to gathering information from traditional sources, the Research Department frequently attends events hosted by proponents of limiting access to justice. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its Institute for Legal Reform and Center for Capital Markets Competitiveness host multiple events each year, as does George Mason University's Civil Justice Caucus Academy, and other corporate interest groups.

## AAJ Public Affairs

### YOUR VOICE ON CAPITOL HILL

AAJ is the only national plaintiff lawyer association working as an advocate for trial lawyers on a broad range of issues. The AAJ Public Affairs Department advocates for your clients' rights and keeps your practice strong and secure by fighting destructive anti-civil-justice legislation and promoting proactive legislation intended to remedy the adverse effects of federal tort reform.

AAJ Public Affairs is also actively involved with agencies in the regulatory rulemaking process. AAJ monitors agency regulatory action that affects members and their practices and fights to ensure that all concerns are addressed.

AAJ's effective advocacy keeps your practice strong and secure by:

- ★ Tracking legislative and regulatory issues that affect your practices and your clients.
- ★ Opposing all legislative and regulatory efforts to preempt state tort law.
- ★ Fighting federal tort reform and promoting proactive legislation.

### **The Significance of the 7th Amendment**

The Founding Fathers understood that trial by jury is an essential check on power, fundamentally safeguarding individual liberty. The unfettered right to trial by jury was viewed as indispensable to the functioning of a constitutional republic. AAJ continuously fights to protect the constitutional right to trial by jury.

# AAJ Legal Affairs and Amicus Curiae Program

AAJ's Legal Affairs and Amicus Curiae Program is a critical part of furthering AAJ's mission to support plaintiff attorneys in their efforts to ensure that any person who is injured by the misconduct or negligence of others can obtain justice in America's courtrooms.

AAJ is committed to protecting the civil justice system by:

- ★ Mounting challenges to the constitutionality of laws that restrict access to justice and the availability of a full remedy to those who have been injured;
- ★ Engaging in advocacy relating to court rules on discovery, evidence, and procedure;
- ★ Participating in the development of law in judicial decisions through amicus briefs; and
- ★ Defending pro-consumer regulations when challenged in the courts by corporate interests.

AAJ's Amicus Curiae Program presents the position of the plaintiffs bar directly to the courts through amicus briefs filed in state supreme courts, federal appellate courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

## AAJ PAC

Choosing a member of Congress is as important as choosing a jury. To assist in this critical process, AAJ created a federal political action committee, AAJ PAC. The AAJ PAC supports pro-civil-justice candidates and incumbents, on both sides of the aisle, running for the U.S. Congress. AAJ PAC is the only nonpartisan PAC dedicated to preserving the civil justice system and ranks as one of the top contributors to U.S. House and Senate candidates every cycle. AAJ PAC gives trial lawyers and their clients a powerful voice by spending over \$5.5 million every two years directly in support of federal candidates. Member support and contributions to the AAJ PAC are vital to AAJ's advocacy and continued success.



To learn more about the Legal Affairs and Amicus Curiae Program, including how to request a brief, contact AAJ's General Counsel Anji Jessoramsing at [anji.jessoramsing@justice.org](mailto:anji.jessoramsing@justice.org).



### **Did You Know?**

*The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has spent over \$1 billion on federal lobbying in the past decade.*

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## Lobby Days

### BUILDING CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

AAJ Lobby Days are an incredibly effective way to communicate with elected officials while providing trial lawyers the opportunity to network with colleagues from across the country. Each event is vital to AAJ's efforts on Capitol Hill.

AAJ State Affairs works with member groups and individual state TLAs to execute multiple lobby days each year. Past events include:

- ★ State Leadership Meeting and Lobby Days
- ★ Women Trial Lawyers Caucus Lobby Days
- ★ Minority Caucus Lobby Days
- ★ Republican Trial Lawyers Caucus Lobby Days
- ★ Asbestos Lobby Day
- ★ Georgia Trial Lawyers Lobby Days
- ★ Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys Lobby Day
- ★ Florida Justice Association Lobby Day

Attendees leave each event knowing that they did their part to inform members of Congress about why the fundamental right to trial by jury should be protected. Also, they gain a better understanding of AAJ's resources, the work AAJ is doing to protect the right to trial by jury, and how to engage at the federal level.

#### **Want to hold a state specific lobby day in D.C.?**

Email [state.affairs@justice.org](mailto:state.affairs@justice.org) to arrange an event. Each event can be tailored to meet the needs of your association.



## State Leadership Meeting and Lobby Days

Every other year, AAJ State Affairs hosts the State Leadership Meeting and Lobby Days event for members of the Council of Presidents and TLA Executive Directors. The first part of this event focuses on how AAJ and TLAs can work together. Participants share their thoughts and experiences, learn about the resources AAJ offers, discuss association challenges, and hear about new and emerging legislative trends. The second part of the event focuses on lobbying. Participants receive a comprehensive legislative and political update from AAJ CEO Linda Lipsen, attend a congressional reception and group dinner, and spend a day educating legislators on pending civil justice legislation.

In 2013, 56 TLA leaders from 22 jurisdictions attended the State Leadership Meeting and Lobby Days. In 2015, the event was held in conjunction with the AAJ Fall Meeting and brought in 87 TLA leaders from 35 jurisdictions. AAJ will host another State Leadership Meeting and Lobby Days in the fall of 2017.



***Be the voice for your clients!***

*Develop relationships with your members of Congress and tell them to protect the right to trial by jury.*



## AAJ Communications

### PUBLIC EDUCATION & MESSAGING TO SUPPORT THE CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM

AAJ Communications is the external voice of the association. The communications team, through traditional and online media, highlights the work of trial attorneys, promotes the American civil justice system, and educates the public about the importance of having access to a fair and effective civil justice system. They place stories in the media about issues important to trial lawyers and their clients, as well as legislative and regulatory issues impacting the trial bar.

AAJ Communications also serves as a messaging, media, and public education resource for the states. AAJ Communications provides talking points to TLAs and members to use with the public and media on legislative issues. In addition, they can provide strategies for crisis communications, media training, and assistance with the press.

Personalized media training can cover the following:

- ★ The fundamentals of working with print, broadcast, and online media
- ★ The logistics of a television interview
- ★ Social media best practices
- ★ Crisis communications
- ★ How to incorporate pro-civil-justice messaging in lawyer communications



**Did you know?** AAJ's blog, *Fighting for Justice*, is looking for attorneys to draft articles. Visit [www.justice.org/fighting-for-justice-blog](http://www.justice.org/fighting-for-justice-blog).

**Consider...** doing a joint phone drive to promote your TLA and AAJ membership in your state. Contact [membership@justice.org](mailto:membership@justice.org).

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## AAJ Membership

With national tort reform groups launching relentless attacks on the civil justice system, the role of the trial lawyer has never been more critical. Every day AAJ and your TLA fight these attacks. Trial lawyers must unite to fight back. More members mean we can robustly advocate for people's access to America's courts and help protect your clients' legal remedies. Membership in both AAJ and your state TLA is vital for your clients' rights and the future of your practice.

AAJ members have access to a large, dynamic community of practitioners who willingly share their knowledge, insight, and experience. Enhance your legal expertise and learn trial techniques, tips, and strategies to effectively represent your clients by attending one of AAJ's Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs or by participating in one of AAJ's list servers, Sections, and Litigation Groups. For more information about AAJ membership, go to [www.justice.org/membership](http://www.justice.org/membership).

As an additional resource, AAJ has four Regional Membership Managers who are available to answer questions you may have about AAJ and your state TLA. Regional Membership Managers cover the Midwest (Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio); West (California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington); Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee); and Northeast (Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania).

### **TAKE JUSTICE BACK** **WWW.TAKEJUSTICEBACK.COM**

Take Justice Back is the public education and grassroots campaign launched by AAJ to restore corporate accountability, promote safety, and ensure Americans have access to justice. Take Justice Back uses real stories and facts to directly challenge the myths and propaganda pushed by corporate front groups. The campaign encourages Americans to join the fight to take back their rights by sharing their stories and writing to Congress, federal agencies, and corporate CEOs.

## Get Involved With AAJ

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### ATTEND AN AAJ CONVENTION:

AAJ holds two members-only conventions each year: an Annual Convention and a Winter Convention, featuring:

- ★ Education programs for plaintiff attorneys
  - ★ Sections, Litigation Groups, caucus, and committee meetings
  - ★ Political speakers, including candidates, elected officials, and pundits
  - ★ Social events
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### GET PUBLISHED IN TRIAL MAGAZINE:

*Trial*® is AAJ's flagship publication for attorneys, law professors, judges, and others in the legal community. This award-winning magazine brings readers informative articles about various topics, including practical tips on how to handle certain cases and how to hone your trial skills. It contains news about legal trends and developments, coverage of recent verdicts and settlements in a wide range of practice areas, and commentary and analysis on emerging issues.

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### BECOME AN EDUCATION SPEAKER:

AAJ members are invited to submit programming ideas for AAJ CLE programs. Speakers should be:

- ★ Plaintiff lawyers in good standing with AAJ
- ★ Willing and able to share legal knowledge and experience with colleagues
- ★ Prepared to submit a written paper to supplement to their presentation

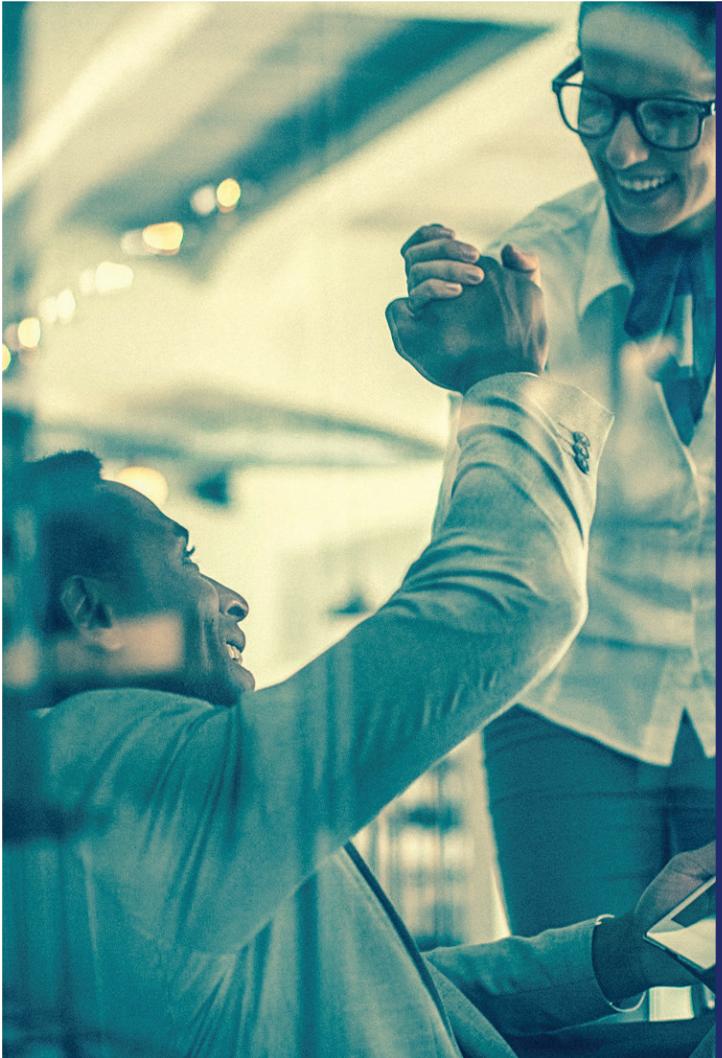


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