



General Wesley Clark’s Statement on the Civil Justice System *Ensuring citizens’ ability to seek meaningful redress for legitimate harm*

America has the finest and fairest system of civil justice in the world. At its best, it is blind to the gender, color, religion and relative power of litigants. It gives every citizen the right to call to account anyone he believes has committed a wrong against him or an error that has harmed him. And it places in the hands of our fellow Americans the determination as to whether, and to what extent, we have suffered harm.

Wes Clark also believes that the civil justice system, like any other complex mechanism, is not perfect, and that anomalies must be corrected where excesses have been found. He supports responsible, targeted change in the civil justice system to promote fairness and equity for all – which can and must be achieved without impairing access to the courts for deserving litigants or imposing arbitrary limits on damage awards. Accordingly, Wes Clark opposes malpractice caps that prevent victims from receiving the compensation they deserve. He opposed a Republican-backed class action reform bill that would have blocked the way for consumers and weakened their ability to protect themselves against irresponsible businesses.

Congress should protect consumers, employees, and retirees – not corporations that produce faulty products and create reckless hazards. From its first day, the Bush Administration has been dedicated to tilting the civil justice playing field in favor of the powerful and against the common man. The President, who won office proclaiming his compassion, has even told a convention of doctors that our civil justice system is a “lottery,” with injured Americans holding what he called the “winning ticket.” Wes Clark believes that people injured by the negligence of others, who are fairly compensated for those injuries, are not lottery winners in any sense.