

November 5, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber, State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of The Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York (LRANY), a nonpartisan, not-for-profit association of businesses, healthcare providers, and concerned taxpayers, I am writing to respectfully urge you to sign S.52A/A.5991 into law.

Too often, our civil justice system is misused. While New Yorkers often hear about plaintiffs using the courts to threaten others for quick settlements and financial gain, our state's civil justice system is also weaponized to intimidate and silence free speech. These abusive lawsuits not only have a chilling effect on public participation, but they also take away valuable court resources from cases with real merit.

The state must do everything in its power to protect the integrity of the civil justice system and prevent our courts from being used as tools of oppression and intimidation. Lawsuit abuse not only detracts from public debate, it can lead to substantial financial harm. There are countless stories in the media about people who find themselves spending tens of thousands of dollars to defend themselves against meritless litigation for simple free speech acts like leaving an online review. Lawsuits are regularly filed against media outlets, whistleblowers, and performing artists, too.

If signed into law, S.52A/A.5991 would empower those targeted by abusive lawsuits and make vengeful litigants think twice before filing such claims in the first place.

There is certainly a great deal more to be done to limit the abuses of our civil justice system, including additional LRANY supported bills pending in the legislature, but S.52A/A.5991 takes an important step by allowing earlier dismissal of frivolous cases and awarding attorney's fees.

Our civil justice system is far from perfect, but S.52A/A.5991 would undoubtedly make it better and more just.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. B. Stebbins', written in a cursive style.

Thomas B. Stebbins
Executive Director
Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York