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**SCHAKOWSKY AND CONSUMER ADVOCATES UNCOVER TRUTH BEHIND BUSH  
PLAN TO LIMIT VICTIM'S  
RIGHTS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. - In advance of President Bush's visit to Madison County, Illinois, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined consumer rights advocates to uncover the truth behind the White House proposal that limits the rights of those injured and the families of victims of medical malpractice.**

□  
"President Bush is offering a solution that is irrelevant to the problem.□ The insurance industry itself has repeatedly and unabashedly refused to say that they will lower rates even if caps are imposed.□ The Bush proposal punishes victims of medical malpractice and does nothing to lower premiums or health care costs or reduce medical errors," said Schakowsky, who serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over tort reform.

While supporting the President's proposal to limit medical malpractice awards, the insurance industry's own spokesman acknowledges that capping non-economic damages would not lower premiums.□ According to Dennis Kelly, American Insurance Association spokesman, "We have not promised price reductions with tort reform.□ We want tort reform to create a more balanced legal system that is more equitable for all parties."□ (Chicago Tribune, 1/3/05.)

The President proposal also unjustly takes away the legal rights of those who have suffered injuries as a result of unsafe medicine and drugs - especially children, women and senior citizens - and it fails to accomplish its purported goal.□ Industry executives and experts from the Congressional Budget Office all agree that weakening state laws to cap non-economic damages will have little or no effect on medical malpractice or health costs.

Schakowsky concluded, "Roughly 98,000 Americans die every year in hospitals due to preventable medical errors.□ How is capping liability improving safety?□ And we now know that the drug industry deliberately hid information about the side effects of some drugs from the public.□ Those drug companies would be shielded from full

**accountability under the President's proposal. Reforming the insurance industry, enacting tough regulatory reforms to reduce premiums for doctors and improving the quality of medical care are the real solutions that the President should be promoting if he truly believes in lowering health care costs for consumers."**