

SCHAKOWSKY CALLS HR 1875 A BLOW AGAINST CONSUMER & SMALL BUSINESS LEGAL RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) issued the following statement in reaction to the passage of H.R. 1875, the Interstate Class Action Jurisdiction Act of 1999.

"I am disappointed that the House of Representatives approved H.R. 1875, the Interstate Class Action Jurisdiction Act of 1999. This legislation is unnecessary.

"There is no evidence that class action suits are clogging state courts and certainly, there is no evidence that federal courts would be able to provide speedier justice for consumers and small businesses. In fact, with the growing number of vacancies on the federal bench, H.R. 1875 would virtually ensure that class action suits would take longer to resolve, if they are heard at all. This is why H.R. 1875 is opposed by the Federal Judicial Conference, the Conference of State Judges, and numerous state attorneys general.

"The problem is not that class action suits are clogging the courts. The problem is that children, families, communities and small businesses are being injured as a result of dangerous, even reckless behavior. They need access to our civil justice system. Many businesses take care to sell safe products. Unfortunately, other do not. Class action suits allow similarly injured consumers and small businesses to join together to seek compensation for their injuries and stop dangerous practices so that others will not be injured.

"This bill is opposed by a broad range of consumer, senior, disability, environmental, health care and other groups, including the National Council of Senior Citizens, Consumer Federation of America, the American Heart Association, and the National Organization for Women Legal Defense Fund.

"This bill takes away the legal rights of consumers and small businesses and I will work to ensure that it does not become the law of the land."