

Court Statistics Reveal Civil Lawsuit Filings are Dropping

Public disinformation campaigns concocted by front groups for insurance companies and powerful corporations are designed to stoke prejudice and fear, and warp public understanding of how our civil justice system works. By manufacturing a mythical “lawsuit crisis,” they are trying to pressure policymakers into shielding wrongdoers from financial liability when their dangerous actions harm innocent people. The numbers prove there is no litigation crisis in our state or our country.

Civil Lawsuit Filings are Dropping Significantly in Illinois:

- Civil case filings in Illinois have dropped 33 percent from 2010 to 2014.¹
- The number of medical malpractice cases in Illinois has been on a steady decline over the past decade, down 43 percent since 2003.²
- The number of civil cases filed in Cook County dropped 40 percent from 2010 to 2014.³
- The number of asbestos lawsuits filed in Madison County has declined 22 percent since 2013.⁴

Civil Lawsuit Filings are Dropping Across the Nation:

- The number of civil cases filed in state courts dropped 7 percent between 2008 and 2012.⁵
- Contract cases (predominately businesses suing businesses or other people for money) make up 64 percent of the civil caseload.⁶
- Tort cases consist of roughly 7 percent of all civil caseloads.⁷
- Tort filings declined by 25 percent between 1999 and 2008.⁸
- Medical malpractice cases make up only 3 percent of tort cases, or about 0.2 percent of the overall civil caseload.⁹
- The number of medical malpractice cases filed in state courts decreased 23 percent between 2001 and 2010.¹⁰
- Product liability cases accounted for just two percent of tort caseloads, or approximately 0.14 percent of the overall civil caseload.¹¹
- The number of product liability cases dropped by 4 percent between 1997 and 2006.¹²

¹ “Annual Report of the Illinois Courts, Statistical Summary,” 2010 to 2014, <http://illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/AnnReport.asp>

² “Collar County Medical Malpractice New Suits,” Law Bulletin Publishing Company, reflecting filings through 2014 in 20 Illinois counties including: Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kendall, Kane, Madison, St. Clair and Will.

³ “Annual Report of the Illinois Courts, Statistical Summary,” 2010 to 2014, <http://illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/AnnReport.asp>

⁴ “Madison County asbestos filings down first half of 2015.” Madison County Record. July 17, 2015.

⁵The National Center for State Courts. *The Landscape of Civil Litigation in State Courts* found at: <http://www.ncsc.org/~media/Files/PDF/Research/CivilJusticeReport-2015.ashx>. This study included Cook County, Illinois courts.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*