

Event Transcript

October 8, 2003

How Texas Tackled Tort Reform: Taking on Trial Lawyers, Inc.

MR. LAWRENCE MONE: Thank you all for coming. I think we'll get started.

I'm Larry Mone, President of the Manhattan Institute. Welcome.

Many of you may know our introducer today, Andrew Napolitano, in his role as senior judicial analyst on the Fox News Channel. His cogent comments on a variety of legal topics are drawn from a long and distinguished legal career.

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[Napolitano introduces Gov. Rick Perry] Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues, the white knight of Texas, Governor Rick Perry.

GOVERNOR RICK PERRY: Judge, thank you very much. Well done, well said.

I'm pleased to be here. I'm honored to be in this what I consider to be the premier public policy institute in America, the Manhattan Institute.

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GOVERNOR RICK PERRY: We actually capped punitive damages in 1995. So the punitive damage side was capped in 1995. And I think – was it – I'm not sure I have anyone on staff.

David, is it capped at 250,000?

MALE VOICE: Four times the economic damages.

GOVERNOR RICK PERRY: Okay, four times the economic damages. Punitives are already capped in Texas. We did that in '95.

Let me just address one thing, another little measurement that I think is important. And that is the lowering of medical malpractice insurance rates.

You know, I shared with you there's only three companies now that write. Obviously, that's going to change and they're going to come in and start writing because there's stability in the market now. But one of those three that does about a third of our health care providers is called the Texas Medical Liability Trust. Three weeks out from the election they sent a letter that if Proposition 12 passed there would be an immediate 12% reduction in liability rates. And they were good to their word. And so there's a number of ways to measure success. That's obviously a small one, an important one.

I don't mind if the trial bar stays in Texas. I just don't want them to be suing all of us.

MALE VOICE: Thank you, Governor.

GOVERNOR RICK PERRY: Thank you all and God bless you.

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