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Editor, The Wall Street Journal
1211 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Dear Editor:

California's personal injury lawyers have reached a new low in their latest attempt to reverse the state's landmark MICRA legislation ("California's Malpractice Ruse," April 16). Having repeatedly failed to undo the law on its merits, they are now resorting to burying their effort in a ballot initiative requiring drug testing for physicians, which they hope will appeal more to the general public.

The truth is, MICRA is widely popular and has broad bipartisan support among California lawmakers and voters. It counts the community hospitals and Planned Parenthood among its supporters. Jerry Brown and Henry Waxman were among the champions of the original bill.

MICRA has withstood decades of challenges by personal injury lawyers because it remains effective in protecting patient access to quality care and keeping health care costs in check. This is why MICRA has served as the model for medical liability reform throughout the nation.

Studies show that less "defensive medicine" is practiced in states with medical liability reform laws that include reasonable limits on non-economic damages (like the laws in California and Texas). Less defensive medicine means less unnecessary tests and procedures, which is good for patients and helps to reduce skyrocketing health care costs.

Furthermore, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has found that comprehensive reforms at the federal level that mirror MICRA would reduce mandatory spending by \$57 billion between 2014 and 2023, and discretionary spending by \$2 billion over that 10-year period, while simultaneously adding \$7 billion to federal tax coffers.

The HCLA remains aligned with bipartisan supporters of MICRA and will continue to push for proven reforms at the state and federal level that will improve access, reduce costs, and protect patients - not personal injury lawyers.

Sincerely,

Mike Stinson, Chair

Katie Orrico, Vice Chair

Health Coalition on Liability and Access

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