



Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York

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Plaintiffs' Lawyer Lobby Shatters Previous Records for Lobbying, Political Contributions

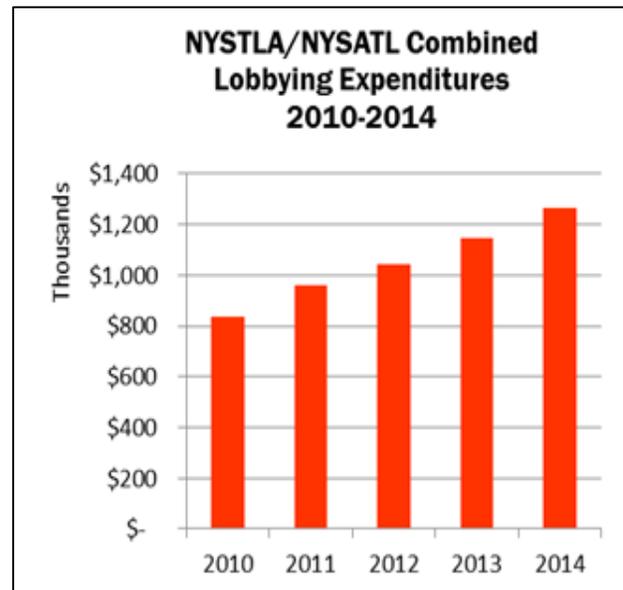
Political spending surged by 27%, lobbying up for the fifth year in a row

(Albany, NY) - Today, the Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York (LRANY), a nonpartisan, nonprofit association focused on statewide civil justice reform, released their annual "Power of Attorney" report, which analyzes the lobbying spending and political contributions of New York's plaintiffs' lawyer lobby. The report found that in 2014, plaintiffs' lawyers, their lobbying groups, and associated Political Action Committees (PACs) spent a combined \$3.09 million to influence state elected officials, a 27% increase over the previous year.

The report, released on the New York State Trial Lawyers Association's second lobby day of 2015, identified \$1.09 million in campaign

contributions from PACs of the state's two plaintiffs' lawyer special interest groups, the New York State Trial Lawyers Association (NYSTLA) and the New York State Academy of Trial Lawyers (NYSATL). It also identified \$1.26 million in lobbying spending by the groups, an 11% increase over the prior year and a 51% increase since 2010. Said LRANY executive director Tom Stebbins, "The trial lawyers spend money on Albany politicians to increase liability for the rest of us. The cost of living and doing business is higher in New York because of the trial lawyers."

The report found that for the first time, NYSTLA, the larger of the two special interest groups, did not give directly to gubernatorial candidates. Instead, it gave \$102,300 - the maximum amount allowable by law - to the state Democratic Party Committee. "This approach makes it impossible for the public to determine who ultimately got that money," said Stebbins, "and it may be a back-door attempt to bypass the strict \$41,100 contribution limit for statewide candidates."



Notable in their absence were contributions from the plaintiffs' law firm of Weitz & Luxenberg, the firm that employed former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. The firm had made substantial campaign contributions in past years.

"One has to wonder if the federal investigation into Sheldon Silver dissuaded the large political contributions of his former employer in the year leading up to his arrest," said Stebbins.

The report concluded that in the wake of the Sheldon Silver scandal, the need to vigilantly monitor the plaintiffs' lawyer lobby is greater than ever.

"This report is proof that the plaintiffs' bar is the biggest special interest we've never heard of. My organization believes the public has a right to know the truly astronomical sums the lawyer lobby is spending to tip the scales of justice in their favor," stated Stebbins.

The full Power of Attorney 2015 report can be accessed here: <http://goo.gl/UIASUa>

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The Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York (LRANY) is a nonpartisan not-for-profit association of businesses, professionals, healthcare providers, membership organizations, taxpayers, and concerned citizens committed to changing New York's legal system to help create jobs and energize our economy.