



# Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York

Justice. Fairness. Common Sense.

---

**For Immediate Release**

July 30, 2015

Contact: Phoebe Stonbely

[pstonbely@lrany.org](mailto:pstonbely@lrany.org)

518.512.5265

## **Lawsuit Reform Alliance Estimates \$200m in Additional Costs for LaGuardia Airport Project Due to the ‘Scaffold Law’**

*Infrastructure projects across the state costs more because of only-in-New York law*

(Albany, NY) – The Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York, a non-profit, nonpartisan group dedicated to legal reform, says that a 100-year old state law will add about \$200m in additional costs to the recently announced LaGuardia Airport rebuild. The law, commonly known as the “Scaffold Law,” exists only in New York and holds contractors and property owners absolutely, 100% liable in lawsuits for construction injuries, regardless of any contributing fault of a the worker.

“We applaud Governor Cuomo and Vice President Biden for investing in our state’s infrastructure, but unless the Scaffold Law is reformed, much of that money will be wasted,” said Tom Stebbins, the group’s executive director. “In this case, the City owns the land, so according to the Scaffold Law, the City and the Port Authority would potentially be liable for any claims -- claims that might not be valid in any other state.”

Citing estimates from national contractors, the group conservatively estimates that approximately 5% of the LaGuardia project’s total cost will be spent on lawsuit claims driven by the Scaffold Law. Said Stebbins, “LaGuardia is just one project. In 2014, the New York City School Construction Authority spent an additional \$215 million on insurance because of the Scaffold Law – enough to build 2-3 new schools. Statewide, the cost to municipalities is estimated to be \$785 million.”

Stebbins noted that the Port Authority, which currently operates LaGuardia Airport, is already well aware of the costs of the Scaffold Law. “Data from the Port Authority shows that the claims costs on the New York side of a bridge project are twice that of the costs on the New Jersey side.” He quipped, “Maybe they should move LaGuardia to Jersey.”

###

*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.*