

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Judicial Hellholes: “Justice” Gone Awry

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JANUARY 29, 2026



In a world of “jackpot” justice, the Judicial Hellholes® represent the worst jurisdictions to find yourself sued – courts where verdicts are detonated, and defendants are devastated.

[The American Tort Reform Association publishes its annual list](#) based on a year of study and analysis. Lauren Sheets Jarrell, vice president and counsel for social justice, reviewed the findings with me on [my latest video](#) and [my latest podcast](#) in [TransportCenter](#).

Why It Matters

Two big things – the list and the “why.” Not just *where* these hellholes are, but *what elements* trigger these conditions.

The List

Drum roll please:

1. Los Angeles
2. New York City
3. S.C. Asbestos Litigation
4. Louisiana Coastal Litigation
5. Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas
6. St. Louis
7. Cook, Madison & St. Clair Counties, Illinois
8. King County & Washington Supreme Court

The Why

Nuclear verdicts: These jurisdictions are the epicenters of massive verdicts that epitomize the “casinoification of litigation.”

Anchoring: Permitting plaintiff attorneys to request massive damage numbers, setting the tone for outsized verdicts. (Note: Not all jurisdictions allow this – Philadelphia does not.)

Reptile Theory: The 2009 plaintiff’s “gift” that keeps on giving... to them. Demonize the company, argue systemic failures, demand a massive verdict as the only cure.

Fraud: It’s fraught. Staged accidents. Medical-legal collusion to inflate damages. A “Fraudemic.”

“Junk Science”: Permitting admission of evidence with dubious scientific legitimacy at trial.

Third-party litigation funding: Investments in lawsuits for a “piece of the action” – plus funding plaintiffs while their suit proceeds, with hefty ROI in interest.

If you have questions about how your company can avoid these courts, please [contact me](#) or any member of the [Saxton & Stump Trucking and Commercial Transportation Group](#) at any time.

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