
Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK

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All-party Peers attack “gross injustice” to dying asbestos victims in Times letter

The national body representing asbestos victims welcomes the letter in the Times today, 3rd March, signed by an all-party group of Peers, which condemns Government proposals contained in Part 2 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Prosecution of Offenders Bill which make asbestos victims dying of the asbestos cancer, mesothelioma, pay up to 25% of their compensation in legal costs. The letter is signed by:

Professor Lord Alton of Liverpool

Baroness Butler-Sloss

Lord Avebury

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

Lord Beecham

Lord McFall of Alcluith

The letter describes as 'risible' the Government's arguments that dying asbestos victims compensation must be cut to deter frivolous and fraudulent claims. They say the government has:

“...identified increasing road traffic accident claims and alleged whiplash claims as the real problem”

And they point out that:

“...road traffic claims amount to over 70% of all personal injury claims.”

The Peers go on to say that:

“The Government's additional argument that making mesothelioma sufferers pay legal costs will drive costs down as they shop around for the best 'deal' is simply untenable as many sufferers are so defeated by their illness they never make a claim as things stand now.”

Eighteen Peers have already signed a letter calling on colleagues to support all-party amendments at Report Stage in the House of Lords to protect asbestos victims from a gross injustice.

Tony Whitston, Forum Chair says: **“The Government have a solution staring them in the face, tackle costs in road traffic cases, yet they are choosing to ignore that and make dying asbestos victims the scapegoats for a crisis elsewhere in the system. The Government can tackle costs without punishing innocent asbestos victims.”**

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