

## **The Asbestos Bill Would Save Companies, Hurt Victims**

The Daily Mail's July 2<sup>nd</sup> editorial, "Asbestos: Resolving the logjam would help both victims and the economy," endorsed asbestos legislation proposed by Sen. Orin Hatch, R-Utah.

The bill would allegedly establish a "fund" for victims.

However, it merely establishes an annual payment plan for liable corporations.

There would be no fully funded guaranteed account set up for asbestos victims. It would be no more than an I.O.U. that caps payments.

The bill would stop and dismiss all asbestos lawsuits.

Further, it negates any settlement or recent verdict. Thus, a defendant does not have to keep its contractual promise to pay a victim or widow.

Corporations such as Halliburton have already pledged money and stock to set up real funds for current and future victims. Hatch's law might reduce Halliburton's liability from over \$4 billion to \$450 million.

Thousands of West Virginia workers were exposed to asbestos by 1980 despite evidence that the asbestos industry knew of the danger since the 1930s.

The problem is not the victim or widow. It is the cover-up. Now millions of dollars owed West Virginians may never be paid.

Mesothelioma cancer victims or the widows have expedited trials in West Virginia.

The true logjam is created by this bill. Victims will wait 10 to 12 years to receive reduced compensation or none at all.

The corporations who knowingly poisoned them get a windfall. The victims get left holding the bag.

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