



Washington Legal Foundation: STATE HIGH COURT RULINGS INDICATIVE OF ALABAMA'S CIVIL JUSTICE TURNAROUND

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Alabama's tort system is winning attention again, except this time for reasons opposite twenty years ago when it earned a dangerous reputation. The distance traveled can be seen in a recent decision by the Alabama Supreme Court, *Sandoz, Inc. v. State of Alabama*, 2012 WL 2866764 (July 13, 2012), which reversed a \$78.4 million verdict against a pharmaceutical manufacturer.

The *Sandoz* decision is a victory for the rule of law, as well as another cautionary tale for states who would consider hiring outside contingency-fee lawyers to aggressively pursue "regulation by litigation." It also is a healthy sign of Alabama's turnaround, paralleled-not coincidentally-by major business growth in the state including the announcement of Airbus's recent decision to locate a U.S. manufacturing facility there.

It was almost two decades ago, in 1993, when author David Frum published an alarming column in *Forbes* magazine entitled "Unreformed," recounting how Alabama had become the "worst place in America to be a civil defendant." A similar article in *Time* labeled Alabama as "tort hell," a place "where corporate America bleeds for the public good." Such news sent businesses scrambling for the exits, inspiring a new literary genre (state tort rankings), and ushering in a tort reform movement that has become a cottage industry. To read more about this topic, please see full article [here](#).

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