



Polling Results: A Barrier to Justice for Taxpayers Harmed by Corporate Misconduct

Recent polling data from Lake Research Partners answered two overall questions:

- (1) How do voters view consumer protection and access to justice?
- (2) How do voters view an existing but an obscure tax issue* once it is explained to them?

Voters Strongly Support Consumer Protection Laws and Meaningful Access to Justice

- Voters overwhelmingly value consumer protections, especially laws to protect people against unfair, deceptive, or harmful corporate practices. 83% think it is very or extremely important to have laws to protect people against unfair, deceptive, or harmful corporate practices?
- 80% of voters think it is extremely or very important to enforce federal regulations.
- **Accountability** – Voters across major subgroups (both political parties, women, older voters, college and non-college attendees) consider it important for corporations to be accountable for many different kinds of harm they cause, including when: they sell products they know can harm people’s health (67%); sell cars known to have problems without disclosing them (59%); lend money with different fees based on a person’s race, ethnicity, or gender (58%); debt collection agencies continue to try and collect payment from the wrong person (56%); credit reporting agencies refuse to correct a mistake on a person’s credit report (52%).
- **Legal actions** – Voters overwhelmingly believe people should have the ability to ‘bring a case’ (81%)/ ‘file a lawsuit’ (79%) against a corporation that has harmed them. This is a core value across party lines. 93% of Democrats and 87% of Republicans favor allowing people to file a lawsuit.
- **Affordability of lawsuits** – Most voters believe that it is not affordable at all for a person to bring a case against a corporation. Fewer than 3 in 10 say they could afford to bring a case.
- **Support affordability** – Strong majorities of voters across subgroups favor making it easier for people to afford bringing a case against a corporation in order to hold them accountable. Men

(85%), Women (87%), Democrat (89%), Republican (85%). Older voters and women most strongly favored.

- **Fee shifting/Reimbursed legal fees** – *After survey participants were read the below description of fee shifting, voters across demographics expressed support at strong levels. A 79% percent majority of voters favor fee shifting, including 54 percent who strongly favor.

*“One way of making it more affordable for people to bring a case is a policy called “fee shifting.” Fee shifting means that when an accused person or corporation loses their case, they pay the legal fees of the winning party. For example, if a person sues a corporation and the ruling favors the person, the corporation pays the legal fees of the person.”

Favor Change in Law to Stop Taxing Consumers for Reimbursed Legal Fees That Go to Their Attorneys

- “Attorneys pay taxes on the fees they earn. When reimbursed legal fees are awarded in cases they win, the people they represent should not have to pay taxes on the same fees.” After the above tax issue messaging, voters overwhelmingly favor changing the tax code so that a person who wins a case against a corporation is not taxed on the reimbursed legal fees awarded in the case that goes to their attorney. 83% of Democrats & 81% of Republicans favored changing the tax code.

- Majorities of voters across demographics say they would be more favorable toward their member of Congress if they supported this proposal to change the tax code. 63% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans.

- Taxing consumers on reimbursed fees that go to their attorneys is a barrier to justice when they are harmed.