

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association Calls for Sunshine in Political Advertising**

### ***Legislative or ballot initiatives considered possibilities in fight against “Dark Money”***

The Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association (ATLA), the state’s largest professional association of trial attorneys today called for greater “sunshine” in political campaign advertising to ensure Arkansas voters know which candidate, political organization or business is attempting to influence their vote. The call includes the possibility of legislative action or a possible ballot initiative around the issue.

“The so-called Judicial Crisis Network has spent an estimated half a million dollars on ads here in just the last two weeks in an effort to influence the Chief Justice race with false accusations about trial lawyers,” said Bob Edwards, ATLA President. “The people of Arkansas have no idea who is behind them, be it an individual, a business or industry, or some other foreign actor seeking to influence our courts. ATLA is calling for an end to this dangerous practice in this and future elections.”

The current dark money expenditure by this group is by no means a first for the state. In 2014, the same unknown special interests spent thousands of dollars in Arkansas’ attorney general race, as well as attempting to influence state Supreme Court races in Michigan and North Carolina in recent years.

The threat posed by Dark Money extends much further than one candidate or one election. It is a direct threat to our constitutional rights when one entity seeks to influence our courts and government with little to no accountability. Allowing the process to continue unchecked will result in an imbalance of government that forever places consumers on the losing end of the political system.

“With early voting in Arkansas beginning today, we intend to keep this issue before the public,” said Edwards. “If necessary, we will also be ready to

pursue legislation aimed at requiring greater disclosures in such campaign advertising, working with members of all parties to ensure that these out-of-state interests hear this message loud and clear: Arkansas is not for sale.”

*The Arkansas Trial Lawyers Association (ATLA), founded in 1963, was established in order to protect the constitutional rights of all Arkansans to a trial by jury. Through advocacy and education, we fight to protect the health and safety of our citizens, as well as the freedom of all Arkansans to hold wrongdoers accountable. Through continuing legal education programs and publications, ATLA serves its membership by providing training in all fields and phases of advocacy. The association is a volunteer organization with a statewide membership of approximately 1,000 lawyers from all 75 counties and several states.*

On the web at [Arktla.org](http://Arktla.org).

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