

Governor Scott Walker's "Tort Reforms"



Wisconsin Governor and ALEC alumni Scott Walker's first action upon taking office was to push "tort reform" measures from the ALEC corporate wish list to protect corporations from lawsuits. This bill, [Wisconsin Act 2](#), passed on a party-line vote and was signed into law by Walker in January 2011. It incorporates several "tort reform" bills supported by ALEC corporations. For example, it:

- Adopts parts of ALEC's "[Punitive Damage Standards Act](#)," limiting the ability to hold corporations accountable for outrageous acts of negligence or recklessness.
- Draws liberally from the ALEC "[Product Liability Act](#)," giving corporations free rein to manufacture shoddy products that can wound or maim, so long as the product is approved by a regulatory agency (and even though corporations routinely work to water-down regulatory safety standards), even if the corporation knew the product was dangerous. See also the ALEC "[Regulatory Compliance with Liability Act](#)."
- Draws from elements of the "[Comparative Fault Act](#)" and "Joint and Several Liability Act" in changing the standards for apportioning fault to corporations.
- Extends liability protections to the nursing home industry (which supported Walker in the election), similar to ALEC bills such as the "[Non-Economic Damages Act](#)," limiting awards in cases involving for long-term skilled nursing home providers.
- Adopts the ALEC "[Reliability in Expert Testimony Standards Act](#)" verbatim, imposing federal rules corporations favor for determining who can testify as an expert witness in the state court.

After Governor Walker changed the rights of injured Wisconsin residents, ALEC [publicly applauded](#) his actions.

For a marked-up version of Wis Act 2 noting the relevant ALEC bills, click [here](#).

For an updated look at ALEC's "tort reform" agenda in Wisconsin, see the Center for Media and Democracy's in-depth report, "[ALEC Exposed in Wisconsin: The Hijacking of a State](#)."

Read more about the ALEC "tort reform" agenda at [prwatch.org](#), and see the Center for Justice & Democracy's 2010 "[America's Worst Top Model](#)" report.