

David Strouss Video Transcript

Thornton Law Firm logo

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I've been at the firm since 1985 so for 30 years. I have a strong interest before I joined the firm in both environmental matters and in public health matters. And since I joined the firm I have specialized in representing families and more specifically children who have been born with catastrophic birth injuries due to exposures to toxic agents in the environment and in the workplace.

I can't point to a particular case but there's a small group of our first round of cases that we prepared for trial including cases in California against semi-conductor companies located there, cases in Phoenix, Arizona against semi-conductor companies, and cases here in Massachusetts and we've been able to successfully resolve almost all those cases.

It really is a vehicle in order to effect change that I think is important in the area of worker health and safety as well as environmental health and safety for all of us. You can affect change through government work, you can affect change through medical and many other disciplines, but the law has allowed us where other mechanisms fail to accomplish change. When you sue the largest corporations and most successful companies really in the history of the planet, because at a very low level in plants workers are being injured and you are successful in that lawsuit, many companies will change their policies. They may feel that OSHA is never going to really have the resources to regulate these chemical exposures or that the government, because of competing interests, are unable to really impose the regulations that might protect workers more, but these lawsuits can affect change and I think that's why we all have done that work in this law firm from beginning with the asbestos industry where there no longer is asbestos in most of our insulation products because of the litigation.

Similarly in my cases the information was developing that that was harmful - reproductively harmful - meaning to pregnant women and to their offspring that this could really hurt these unborn children. That chemical is widely in use in the industry in the 1980s into the early 1990s. These lawsuits began and also coincided with studies coming out that these chemicals. the ethylene glycol ethers, were

known to be reproductively toxic. For significant, significant amounts of money that will go to the families to take care of the needs of these children.

When you're representing children who are going to spend the rest of their life in a wheelchair or with tubes attached to them so they could breathe or speak or have been grotesquely deformed from the day they were born with very little that can be done for them. It affects you. This is litigation about these children. This was at no fault of theirs and frankly no fault of their parents but they are going to spend their entire lives in this situation and nobody other than whatever state programs may exist for medical and other living assistance is going to help them. So when you have those children sitting in this office with their parents and there's as much impact - there's a great impact on the parents as well who will dedicate their lives to taking care of their children - you want to do everything you can in your power in our legal system to help them.