

Rep. Johnson, Sen. Blumenthal Introduce Legislation to End Forced Arbitration and Restore Accountability for Consumers, Workers

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Press Release

Sen. Blumenthal introduces Senate companion; Bills would remedy Supreme Court ruling, Restore consumers' rights to justice through courts

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson (D-GA) and U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) introduced the FAIR Act: The Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal Act, which would increase Americans' rights to seek justice and accountability through the court system.

The House bill — [H.R. 1423](#) — would eliminate forced arbitration clauses in employment, consumer, and civil rights cases, and would allow consumers and workers to agree to arbitration after a dispute occurs. The House bill has 147 cosponsors. Sen. Blumenthal (D-CT) introduced the companion bill in the Senate, which has 34 cosponsors.

Rep. Johnson announced the bill at a [news conference](#) on Capitol Hill with Sen. Blumenthal (CT), Judiciary Chairman Rep. Jerrold Nadler (NY), Chairman of the House Antitrust Subcommittee Rep. David Cicilline (RI), Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor Rep. Bobby Scott (VA), Rep. Cheri Bustos (IL), former Fox News Anchor Gretchen Carlson, members of the American Association for Justice, Public Citizen and victims of arbitration rulings.

“Forced arbitration agreements undermine our indelible Constitutional right to trial by jury, benefiting powerful businesses at the expense of American consumers and workers,” said Rep. Johnson, chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Court, Intellectual Property and the Internet. “Americans with few choices in the marketplace may unknowingly cede their rights when they enter contracts to buy a home or a cell phone, place a loved one in a nursing home, or start a new job. We must fight to defend our rights and re-empower consumers.”

“There is a lot of use of the phrase ‘rigged system’ these days,” Sen. Blumenthal said. “One of the systems that is truly rigged against consumers, workers, and the American people is our current system of forced arbitration. Forced arbitration is unfair, unjust, and un-American. One of the fundamental principles of our American democracy is that everyone gets their day in court. Forced arbitration deprives Americans of that basic right. This kind of injustice has to end. The Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal Act is a measure whose time has come.”

“I am proud to join Senator Blumenthal and Congressman Johnson as an original cosponsor of the Forced Arbitration Injustice Repeal Act, or the FAIR Act, which would end the use of forced arbitration in consumer, employment, civil rights, and antitrust disputes,” said Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler. “Victims of sexual assault, racial discrimination, and other forms of corporate abuse and misconduct deserve their day in court. As the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, I will

not rest until we have fully restored these rights by passing historic legislation to end forced arbitration.”

“The men and women who serve our country in uniform deserve nothing but the best,” said Congressman David Cicilline, who also introduced a separate bill on forced arbitration — the Justice for Servicemembers Act. “For all the sacrifices they make overseas, they shouldn’t worry about whether they’ll have a job when they come home. I’m proud to be introducing this bill today to protect their legal rights. I hope Congress will move swiftly to do right by our brave men and women.”

“Forced arbitration clauses buried in the fine print hurt everyone,” said Linda Lipsen, CEO of the American Association for Justice. “If corporations know they won’t ever be held publicly responsible, our civil rights, as well as our public health and safety are at risk, from the cars we drive, to the jobs we take, and the food we eat. That’s what makes this legislation so important, and I commend the advocates and Members of Congress who stood up today to demand action.”

Supporting Organizations: A broad coalition of public-interest groups — including: Alaska PIRG, Alliance for Justice, Allied Progress, American Family Voices, Americans for Financial Reform, Arkansans Against Abusive Payday Lending, Bend the Arc Jewish Action, Cape Cod Consumer Assistance Council, Inc., Center for Civil Justice, Center for Economic Integrity, Center for Justice & Democracy, Center for Responsible Lending, Committee to Support the Antitrust Laws, Communications Workers of America (CWA), Consumer Action, Consumer Advocacy and Protection Society (CAPS), Consumer Federation of America, Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, Demos, Earthjustice, East Bay Community Law Center, Empire Justice Center, Equal Rights Advocates, Equality North Carolina, Florida Alliance for Consumer Protection, Georgia Watch, Heartland Alliance, Housing and Economic Rights Advocates, Impact Fund, Indiana Institute for Working Families, Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc., Kentucky Equal Justice Center, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Long Term Care Community Coalition, Main Street Alliance, Michigan Community Action, Movement Advancement Project, National Association for College Admission Counseling, National Association of Consumer Advocates, National Association of Social Workers, National Center for Law and Economic Justice, National Center for Transgender Equality, National Consumer Law Center, National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, National Consumers League, National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), National Employment Law Project, National Employment Lawyers Association, National Equality Action Team (NEAT), National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund, National Organization for Women, National Student Legal Defense Network, New Mexico Center on Law & Poverty, North Carolina Justice Center, Oxfam America, Pipeline Parity Project, Policy Matters Ohio, Pride at Work, Prosperity Works, Public Good Law Center, Public Citizen, Public Justice, Public Justice Center, Public Law Center, SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, Statewide Poverty Action Network, Tennessee Citizen Action, The Center for Popular Democracy, The Community Church, The D.C. Consumer Rights Coalition, Virginia Poverty Law Center, West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, Wildfire: Igniting Community Action to End Poverty in Arizona, Witness to Mass Incarceration, Women Employed, Woodstock Institute.

| To watch the news conference, click [HERE](#) |

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