

GEORGIA TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION
Protecting the Constitutional Promise of Justice for All by
Guaranteeing the Right to Trial by Jury,
Preserving and Independent Judiciary,
And Providing Access to the Courts for All Georgians

Media Release

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**Georgia Trial Lawyers Condemn the
Practice of ‘Trolling for Victims’**

Atlanta-The tragedy resulting from the Imperial Sugar Refinery has been made worse by the solicitation by unprincipled lawyers vying for the victims' cases. The news has reported that TV ads, print advertisements and even visits to the Augusta Burn Center by lawyers have occurred. Members and leadership of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association are outraged by this reprehensible behavior.

"The Georgia Trial Lawyers Association unequivocally condemns these unconscionable acts by attorneys," said the President of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association, Joe Watkins. "We are shocked that attorneys from Georgia and other states are attempting to solicit the families while they are mourning the loss of loved ones and praying at bedsides at the Augusta Burn Facility."

The State Bar of Georgia Rules prohibit attorneys from contacting victims immediately following a tragedy. "This is not the time for lawyers from Georgia or any other state to harass families and victims of a tragedy. To say that is in 'poor taste' is putting it mildly," said Watkins. "The families and survivors will decide if and when they will seek legal advice."

The Georgia Trial Lawyers Association, and its leadership, strongly believes that the Rules governing Georgia's State Bar regarding such solicitation should be strengthened and the Association urges the State Bar to take appropriate action regarding this matter.

"Unfortunately, it is the unscrupulous behavior of a few attorneys, often from out of state, that reflects poorly on the image of all attorneys. That conduct is in no way a reflection of the principles, ethics and the integrity of the members of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association," said Watkins. "I speak for not only myself, but for our entire Association when I say that my thoughts and prayers are with the workers of the Imperial Sugar Refinery and their loved ones."

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