

## Lawyers play a vital role when defenses fail

From Mark Sullivan

Reynolds & Kenline, 110 E. Ninth St.

The headlines have been dominated lately by examples of corporations letting profits trump basic consumer protections — runaway cars, a tragic but avoidable mine collapse, an exploding oil rig and out-of-control financial institutions nearly destroying America's economy.

Corporations knowingly put profits ahead of public safety, and federal agencies lack the resources and will to adequately protect and safeguard the American people.

When these first lines of defense fail to protect the safety of consumers, only the civil justice system can hold negligent corporations accountable and

restore justice.

Once these latest scandals fade away, lawmakers will continue beating the drum for "tort reform," which is nothing more than immunity for the same corporations responsible for injuring consumers and destroying our environment.

Insurance companies and other corporations have spent millions of dollars demonizing trial lawyers, lobbying for damage caps and blaming the civil justice system.

Yet when that system functions as it should, trial lawyers speak for the interests of injured families and consumers. It is our civil justice system that produces change, enhances safety, holds wrongdoers accountable and protects our environment.

*Editor's note: The author is a member of the Iowa Association for Justice.*