



What Would Cars Be Like Without Trial Lawyers?

Written On April 23, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

There's a great [illustration](#) at the Web site of the [American Association for Justice](#) that shows what our automobiles might be like today were it not for the efforts of plaintiff trial lawyers over the years. There is also a lengthy report titled [Driven to Safety](#) that details the improvements in safety that have been largely the results of lawsuits filed against auto manufacturers. Here is a brief description:

In the wake of Toyota's sudden acceleration scandal, automobile safety is once again a hot-button issue. After internal documents showed Toyota knew about potential defects, hid them from regulators, and even bragged about saving money from limiting its recalls, Toyota received the largest fine ever levied against an auto manufacturer.

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After 50 deaths and 8.5 million recalled cars, this saga is yet another example of regulation as an incomplete safeguard and manufacturers that put profits over safety. Unfortunately, this scenario has been repeating itself for decades.

In the 1960s, court cases began highlighting the dangers of car design and the willful negligence of manufacturers in designing cars that they knew to be unsafe. Since then the civil justice system has worked hand-in-hand with regulation to protect Americans, while spurring generations of safety innovations.

Litigation will ultimately play a key role in identifying what went wrong with Toyota. These findings will aid regulators and legislators in protecting the American public in the future. By holding manufacturers accountable, the civil justice system will continue to spur safety innovations, as it has done for half a century.