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7th Amendment Right to a Jury Trial

We hear much about some parts of our Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution, such as the First Amendment's free speech rights and the Second Amendment's right to bear arms. As important to our liberty and pursuit of justice is the constitutional right to a jury trial in many suits for damages in civil cases. Asserting that right is under attack with a relentless campaign by some of the most powerful corporations in the country to discredit the valuable service our jury system provides.

The reason is, our system of justice allows individual citizens the right to challenge dangerous actions of those powerful corporations in a court of law before a jury. While individual citizens might not have the power or resources to successfully lobby a legislature or Congress, we all have the power to take a case in front of a jury of our peers to decide whether a powerful corporation brought harm to an individual through wrongful conduct.

This right stems from legal documents as old as the Magna Carta. Among our founding fathers, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton were particularly outspoken in their defense of the right to a jury in civil cases as a protection for the liberty of the citizenry. As a result, the right to a jury trial in civil cases was embodied in the Bill of Rights to our United States Constitution as the 7th Amendment.