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DRUG VICTIMS HAVE NO RECOURSE IN MICHIGAN

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I want to thank the 12 Americans from Texas who, with no financial stake in the outcome of the Vioxx® case, determined that corporate profit at any cost is unacceptable.

Dozens of documents -- internal memos, e-mails and opinion pieces by scientists and officers -- showed Vioxx® increased heart risks. Jurors witnessed statements and conduct by Merck officials that showed that -- despite problems -- Merck tried to rush federal approval of Vioxx® just to beat a competitor.

In letters to doctors, Merck seriously understated the heart risks to patients taking Vioxx® and told drug salesmen to play "Dodge ball" when doctors voiced concern.

In Michigan, Merck will never face a jury. The Michigan Legislature handed the drug industry a "get out of jail free" card that will allow it to keep every nickel of blood money profit from drugs that injure and kill citizens in our state.

Despite misleading claims from advocates for immunity like Lawrence Mann ("Drug lawsuits demand one national rule," Aug. 31), there is no exception to the drug industry's immunity from responsibility in Michigan. The U. S. Supreme Court has declared that Michigan victims of Vioxx® and other deadly drugs cannot bring such claims, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit has held that the drug industry's immunity is absolute. In Michigan -- unlike any other state -- there is no exception, there is no recovery and there is no justice.

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