



American Bar Association  
**News Release**

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ABA Press Room  
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**MIDYEAR MEETING ADVISORY II:  
WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS, ASBESTOS LITIGATION AND ACCESS TO  
HEALTHCARE INFORMATION AMONG ISSUES TO BE DEBATED  
BY ABA POLICY-MAKING BODY**

CHICAGO, Jan. 18, 2005 – How should people who serve time for crimes they did not commit be compensated? Should healthcare providers be required to provide patients with all of the information they need to make fully informed medical decisions? How can the federal government play a role in solving the asbestos litigation crisis that is clogging courtrooms?

More than 500 lawyers from across the country will debate these issues and more when the American Bar Association House of Delegates convenes during the association's 2005 Midyear Meeting in Salt Lake City, Feb. 9 to 15.

The ABA's policy-making House of Delegates, composed of 539 delegates representing ABA entities, state and local bar associations, and affiliated organizations, will meet to consider policy recommendations on a variety of topics on Monday, Feb. 14, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The House will meet in the Grand America Hotel, Lobby Level, Grand Ballroom.

[Recommendation 104](#) opposes government actions and policies that interfere with patients' abilities to receive from healthcare providers information necessary for fully informed healthcare decision making, and information with respect to access to medically appropriate care.

As stated in the accompanying report, existing ABA policies support the rights of patients of federally funded family planning clinics to receive counseling and referrals

with respect to all medical options relating to pregnancy, and the duty of healthcare professionals in such facilities to advise their patients in accordance with their best medical judgment and professional ethics. This recommendation would apply those protections to all patients and to health professionals practicing in other healthcare settings.

[Recommendation 108A](#) urges jurisdictions to adopt statutes to compensate people who have been convicted and incarcerated for crimes they did not commit. According to the accompanying report, more than 150 people have been exonerated by DNA testing.

[Recommendation 108B](#) calls for ensuring that no prosecution is based solely on uncorroborated jailhouse informant testimony, and [108C](#) urges governments to establish standards for defense counsel to identify capital cases that demand greater expertise and resources.

[Recommendation 109A](#) recommends that the federal government undertake an urgent study of the impact of the federal government in the causation of asbestos-related injuries, and to identify an appropriate role for the federal government in solving the “asbestos litigation crisis.”

Among other recommendations are proposals to:

- Adopt policy supporting change in U.S. law to award a patent to the first inventor to file an application for a patent in order to reduce uncertainty and unpredictability in the U.S. patent system ([Recommendation 102](#)).
- Establish a federal affordable housing trust fund to increase the availability of affording housing ([Recommendation 111](#)).
- Support the repeal of annual caps on green cards that result in delays in granting lawful permanent residence to individuals who have already been granted asylum in the United States ([Recommendation 112](#)). Adopt the ABA Principles Relating To Juries and Jury Trials and urge appropriate entities to review their various sets of jury standards and revise them as necessary to conform to the Principles ([Recommendation 113](#)).

A summary of all recommendations is available online at <http://www.abanet.org/leadership/2005/midyear/summary/SummaryofRecs.doc>. Full text of any recommendation and accompanying report is available by clicking on the relevant report number. Copies of all reports and recommendations will be available in the ABA Press Room during the Midyear Meeting.

Accredited reporters are welcome to attend and cover all sessions. A Press Room for working journalists will be in the Grand American Hotel Imperial Ballroom and will open for on-site media registration beginning at noon on Thursday, Feb. 10. Thereafter the Press Room will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and will close one hour after the adjournment of the House of Delegates on Monday, Feb. 15.

ABA credentialing guidelines can be found online at <http://www.abanews.org/credentials.html>. Whether registering online or by fax, reporters

must fax a copy of their official press credentials to the ABA Media Relations Division at 312/988-5865.

Reporters can register on-site in the ABA Press Room. Housing is available directly from the hotels. Hotels offering the ABA rate are listed online at <http://www.abanet.org/midyear/2005/>.

Registrants can make arrangements for air transportation through Tower Travel. ABA airline discounts are available by visiting the ABA online travel Web site at <http://www.abanet.org/midyear/2005/> or by calling Tower Travel at 800/921-9190.

For general media information please contact 312/988-6171, or visit <http://www.abanews.org/meetings/midyear05.html>.

With more than 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law in a democratic society.