



WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION

for

JUSTICE

formerly WASHINGTON STATE TRIAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

March 6th, 2009

The Honorable Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
The Honorable Senator Jim Hargrove
The Honorable Senator Jim Kastama

Dear Senators Haugen, Hargrove, and Kastama:

We are writing on behalf of our organization to express our sincere regret for the advertisements in your papers regarding your alleged positions on Senate Bill 5964. It is not an approach we support, and we do not condone that it happened.

We were not involved in this action. Nevertheless, as primary supporters of the bill we have to acknowledge that it was a very public attack on members of this institution before any action or vote had even taken place, by people associated with our side of the issue. That is not how we conduct ourselves here, and we are very distressed that this occurred.

While we have strongly supported this bill, we also appreciate that many members were still reviewing and forming their views and position on this bill. It has never been a tactic or approach of ours to attack a member for their position on a particular bill or issue, especially before any action has been taken.

We know there are any number of principled reasons members take positions on issues, including on this bill, and we know there are times we will be in disagreement. There is not a member of this body we have not had a disagreement with, but that is the beauty and dynamic of the legislative and democratic process. It is not our approach to use this mechanism to make a point, and we will not raise disagreements to this level.

In our twenty plus years as an organization of being heavily involved with the legislative process, we have never used this tactic, and we disavow it. We hope our track record in that regard speaks for itself.

This is perhaps the most challenging session any of us have ever experienced. This has added to your personal challenges for you and your families in ways we can only imagine. We sincerely regret that this occurred.

Larry Shannon
Government Affairs Director

Michael Temple
Government Affairs Consultant

John Budlong
President

Janet Rice
Past President

CC: Members, WA State Senate

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