

November 23, 1985

## **Extend Time Period for New York Toxic Suits**

To the Editor:

As the New York State Legislature reconvenes, we once again begin the fight to extend the statute of limitations for toxic-exposure lawsuits. Current state law requires that lawsuits for toxic exposure be brought within three years of the exposure.

This provision shuts out claims of victims whose injuries, as a result of exposure to such substances as asbestos or DES, are not manifested for 10, 20 or more years. Consequently, there is no legal recourse for these victims, who are unable to receive compensation for medical expenses, loss of wages or pain and suffering.

For each of the last five years, the Assembly has passed legislation to extend the statute of limitations to three years from the time of discovery of illness. As a result of lobbying by environmental and good-government groups, such as the New York Public Interest Research Group, a majority of State Senators publicly supports the measure. However, this legislation has not been approved despite the support of 24 of 35 Republican Senators.

Since a majority of Republicans in the Republican-controlled State Senate supports extending the time period within which toxic victims can sue, strong pressure from their constituents is warranted in order to overcome Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson's apparent failure to get the bill to a vote, as well as powerful opposition to this legislation from the Business Council, pharmaceutical companies and the chemical industry.

SHELDON S. LEFFLER    COREY B. BEARAK  
Hollis, N.Y., Nov. 12, 1985

The writers are, respectively, City Councilman, 16th District, and his counsel.