

Public Citizen

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



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Public Citizen

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Public Citizen is a national nonprofit membership organization based in Washington, D.C. Since its founding by Ralph Nader in 1971, Public Citizen has fought for corporate and government accountability in order to guarantee the individual's right to safe products, a healthy environment and workplace, fair trade, and clean and safe energy sources. Public Citizen is active in Congress, the courts, government agencies and the news media.

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The articles in this special 35th anniversary magazine were written by Angela Bradbery, Valerie Collins, Bob Guldin and Booth Gunter. Parts of the issue were adapted from a forthcoming book about Public Citizen's history, written by Brian Dooley and Booth Gunter. The magazine was designed by Kristy I. Jackson.

Public Citizen

THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Illustration by Matt Wuerker

Dear Member,



Photo by Brendan Hoffman

*This year marks a special occasion for **Public Citizen** – our 35th anniversary. It is a time of reminiscence as we, in this special issue, reflect upon our rich history and our many accomplishments on behalf of consumers.*

But as I look back to 1971, when we first opened our doors, I am sobered by the reality of our present political situation and struck by the parallels to that era of Watergate, when President Nixon's abuses of power were first being exposed to the American people.

Then, as now, our country was mired in an unpopular war – marked by the deception of our political leaders – that seemed to have no legitimate purpose and no end in sight.

Then, as now, we had a president who was obsessed with secrecy and who put himself above the law.

Then, as now, we had secret surveillance of U.S. citizens in the name of national security.

The difference is that in the 1970s we had a Congress willing to stand up to an imperial president and exercise its duty to hold him accountable through meaningful oversight hearings and, eventually, the impeachment process. Sadly, we do not have that today. Rather, we have one of the most shamefully venal Congresses in history. The cabal that runs this Congress has institutionalized corrupt and unethical practices that are inimical to democracy.

This Congress is overseeing the virtual merger of the government and big business, with calamitous consequences for citizens. And while congressional leaders collect their lavish free vacations, meals and campaign cash from the corporate lobbyists they serve, President Bush gets away with authorizing torture, secret imprisonment of suspects, illegal wire-tapping, gross incompetence and lying his way into a disastrous war of choice.

But, as we saw with Nixon, even the mightiest can fall – and fall hard.

The power of citizens to overcome great odds is one of the defining hallmarks of a democracy. Our democratic rights give us the power to repair our government and reorder its priorities. But we must exercise our rights or we will lose them. We must hold our leaders accountable to democratic principles or we will lose our democracy.

Public Citizen has been doing just that – on your behalf – for the past 35 years, and we will continue fighting for what's right.

In the Watergate era, when our founder, Ralph Nader, was on Nixon's "enemies list," we supported the articles of impeachment drafted by Rep. John Conyers Jr., and we helped generate public support for impeachment, the process that ultimately led to Nixon's resignation. We also took Nixon to court repeatedly to uphold the law and constitutional principles, to hold illegal his firing of the Watergate special prosecutor and, finally, to require the disclosure of his secret White House tapes.

Just as we challenged Nixon, we have been working to hold the Bush administration to account across an array of issues – from secrecy to corporate cronyism to the wholesale elimination of health, safety and environmental standards. And we have launched a major campaign to clean up the sleaze in Congress.

It is easy to be lulled into thinking that the worst atrocities and abuses of the past cannot be repeated – but they can. And that's why a democracy must have organizations like Public Citizen. As you know, we maintain our independence by refusing to accept funding from government or business sources.

Democracy demands vigilance and unflinching courage in the face of adversity. Your support has enabled us to uphold these principles for the past 35 years, to fight for our rights and for a government responsive to the needs of all of us, not the privileged few. With your continued backing, we will now take this fight into the next 35 years – and beyond. ■

Sincerely,

Joan Claybrook



Raiders of the **Lost** Democracy



Photo from American Program Bureau

Ralph Nader, president of Public Citizen, 1971-1980

Growing up in the small town of Winsted, Conn., Ralph Nader would listen to the jurors and lawyers when they came to eat lunch at his father's restaurant, just a block from the courthouse. He was so enamored that at times he would go to the courthouse to watch the action. **"I grew up identifying lawyers as fighters against injustice,"** he says.

Pursuing his dream of becoming a lawyer, he went to Princeton and then to Harvard Law School. But at Harvard in the 1950s, the son of Lebanese immigrants became disillusioned. "I realized it was like a high-priced tool factory. They were basically grooming lawyers to service and broker corporate power."

That wasn't the path Nader had in mind. His was the heart of a crusader.

And that crusade for democracy and justice led him to establish Public Citizen to represent the interests of citizens and serve as a counterweight to the power that corporate America wielded over the government.

A key to Public Citizen's success over the ensuing 35 years has been its ability to attract people who, like Nader, believed deeply in citizen participation in government and who were willing to battle against great odds to enact reforms on behalf of the American people. Thousands of such public-spirited people have left their mark on Public Citizen, and Public Citizen has left its mark on them as well.

Nader was already a compelling national figure in 1971, the year Public Citizen was born. Six years earlier, at 31, he had written *Unsafe at Any Speed*, a book exposing the reckless design of General Motors' Chevrolet Corvair and the lack of safety features in many American autos. The

book and resulting congressional investigations led to the first laws subjecting motor vehicles to federal safety standards.

Nader took his newfound fame, propelled by publicity about GM's secret surveillance of him, and used it to investigate and expose other corporate and government abuses. He recruited idealistic young lawyers and students and in 1969 published an expose of the ineffectiveness of the Federal Trade Commission. Other startling investigations followed. A *Washington Post* reporter dubbed the band of muckrakers "Nader's Raiders," and the name stuck.

One of Nader's earliest recruits was Bob Fellmeth, who today chairs the board of Public Citizen Foundation. He recalls that the Nader activists were an unusual crowd in the turbulent 1960s and '70s. Unlike the hippies who sought to drop out or the radicals who wanted to tear down the system, the Naderites wanted America to be the principled democracy they had been taught about in high school civics. "We said, 'Damn it, we want what we were promised. We want that system!'"

By 1969, Nader realized he would need a permanent institutional base for his style of research and activism, and began founding the citizens organizations that became the Nader hallmark. Among those first organizations: the Center for Study of Responsive Law (where he still works), the Center for Auto Safety, the Project on Corporate Responsibility and the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG). He became the "Johnny Appleseed" of the movement, planting public interest sprouts and watching them grow.

Joan Claybrook was one of the early PIRG recruits. Claybrook wasn't new to rough-and-tumble politics. As a child in Baltimore, she had helped her father, a progressive,



Joan Claybrook, president of Public Citizen since 1982, is pictured here in the late 1970s, when she was administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Public Citizen file photo

campaign successfully for city council.

In 1966, as a congressional fellow for Rep. James Mackay, a Georgia Democrat, she had worked with Nader in drafting the landmark auto safety bills that passed Congress that year. She then worked for four years at the newly created National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. When Claybrook joined PIRG in 1970, she was attending night classes at Georgetown Law Center.

“All of us knew we were part of new movement,” Claybrook says, a movement that went beyond the muckraking writers of an earlier generation. “They wrote and we acted. We wanted to change the rules to benefit consumers. We were a new phenomenon.”

In 1971, Nader and his growing Raider team launched an enormously

Nader’s crusade for democracy and justice led him to establish Public Citizen to represent the interests of citizens and serve as a counterweight to the power that corporate America wielded over government.

ambitious new undertaking, the Congress Project. Its goal was to profile every member of Congress, including the identities of their campaign contributors, in time for the 1972 election. About 1,000 people worked on the effort.

Fellmeth headed the Congress Project, and Nader drafted Claybrook to oversee the writing of over 400 magazine-length profiles covering every member of Congress who was running for re-election. Among the many young journalists and journalism students who helped were some who went on to distinguished careers, including E.J. Dionne, now a syndicated columnist for the *Washington Post*, Frank Rich, a *New York Times* columnist, and Evan Thomas, assistant managing editor of *Newsweek*.

On March 29, 1971, Nader founded Public Citizen, which would grow to be the largest of the organizations he launched.

Claybrook joined Nader at Public Citizen in 1972, establishing its Congress Watch division. For four years, she headed Congress Watch, the organization’s lobbying arm. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter named her administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, where she vigorously upgraded the agency’s testing, vehicle safety standards and outreach programs. For example, under Claybrook, NHTSA started its crash-testing program for new vehicles. The agency also instituted a new requirement that vehicles have either automatic seatbelts or air bags – though it took more than 15 years of constant legal and political struggle for the air bag requirement to be implemented.

Nader left the organization in 1980, and Claybrook took the reins in 1982. She has been president ever since.

People’s Lawyers

Alan Morrison, a Harvard law graduate like Nader, was working as an assistant U.S. attorney in New York when he felt the tug of public interest work. An associate who had worked with Nader the previous summer wrote to Nader about Morrison, who returned from a vacation to a message: “Call Ralph Nader’s office.” Morrison interviewed with Nader on the fly, as the consumer advocate was rushing from one appointment to the next. But the two clicked, and Morrison moved from New York to Washington, taking a deep pay cut

“I salute Public Citizen for its tireless efforts to defend the interests of all Americans. With its ceaseless and vigorous defense of consumers over 35 years, Public Citizen has become an invaluable institution in protecting the health of our democracy.”

House of Representatives Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.)



“It is hard to exaggerate the importance of the role that Public Citizen has played for many years in helping those who care about this country become public citizens in the best sense of the word: informed, focused on critical issues, in a position to act constructively. It is a remarkable contribution to making the world a better place.”

Noam Chomsky

Author, activist, professor of linguistics at MIT
Public Citizen member



Public Citizen file photo

Alan Morrison, co-founder of the Public Citizen Litigation Group and its long-time director, in the mid-1970s.

to join the fight for “the little guy.” Together, they founded the Public Citizen Litigation Group in 1972.

Morrison, now a law professor at Stanford University, stayed for 32 years, most of those as director of the Litigation Group, recruiting and leading a dedicated group of colleagues in what was in effect Public Citizen’s own high-powered public interest law firm. During that time, he argued landmark cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and became a fixture in Washington legal circles, known for his work on cases involving the constitutional balance of powers.

Even though the pay was low in comparison with Washington law firms, many of the lawyers Morrison hired stayed with Public Citizen for 10 years or more – a tribute to their own dedication and the group’s *esprit de corps*.

David Vladeck, for example, joined the Litigation Group in 1977. The son of two New York City labor lawyers, he had arrived in Washington to take a fellowship in public interest law at Georgetown University. But the head of the Georgetown program talked to Morrison, then told Vladeck “that there was a position there for me and that

Alan was the best public interest litigation attorney in the universe and if I wanted to learn about public interest law I should go.”

He went. Vladeck stayed at Public Citizen for 25 years, arguing three cases before the U.S. Supreme Court (and winning all three), becoming an expert on regulatory policy and serving for 10 years as the director of the Litigation Group. He is now an associate professor at the Georgetown University Law Center.

Another litigator who arrived in 1977 was Paul Levy, a long-time activist (in high school, he had fought his school district for the right to wear an anti-war black armband). Levy joined Public Citizen’s efforts for union democracy, protecting workers against both corrupt union officials and exploitative bosses. Twenty-nine years later, Levy is still one of the Litigation Group stalwarts, pursuing legal battles on such issues as intellectual property law and federal preemption of state powers.

Now, though, Levy’s work has a distinctly 21st century focus: He is one of nation’s top legal experts on issues of free speech and privacy on the Internet.

Among the dozens of idealists, agitators and organizers who have passed through Public Citizen’s portals, Dr. Sidney Wolfe may be the person who has most consistently struck fear in the hearts of America’s corporate captains. That’s because Wolfe, who has headed Public Citizen’s Health Research Group since its inception in 1972, has time and again blown the whistle on negligence, fraud and misconduct by the health care industry.

Raised in a Cleveland suburb by a pro-labor family, Wolfe graduated from medical school and arrived in Washington to conduct research at the National Institutes of Health. In 1971, Wolfe, who had been active in the anti-war movement, began working with Nader on a case in which Abbott Laboratories had been distributing bacteria-contaminated fluids. After a quick victory (Abbott recalled



Photo by Beverly Orr

the contaminated product), Wolfe was hooked. He began working part-time at Public Citizen, then took the plunge and went full-time in 1972. At 34, Wolfe told Nader, "This is the last job I'll ever have." Wolfe, now 68, has kept his word.

In the decades since, Wolfe has fought the health battle on many fronts – writing articles in medical journals, filing complaints with the Food and Drug Administration, and taking to the airwaves time and again to denounce pharmaceutical company misconduct or publicize educational tools like Public Citizen's best-selling *Worst Pills, Best Pills* books.

Hidden Heroes

Some of the most important players at Public Citizen – people like Phyllis McCarthy – have not necessarily been headline-makers. Intensely loyal and quick with a quip, McCarthy began her career at Public Citizen in 1978 as a typist and worked her way up to managing editor of the Health Research Group's publications, which included books, newsletters and more than 1,000 other documents and reports. After she died in 2001, Public Citizen established the Phyllis McCarthy Public Interest Award, given every year to a person who has worked long and hard behind the scenes to perform critical functions in a public interest group.

Not all of the people who worked at Public Citizen spent their entire careers there. For many, Public Citizen left its stamp on them long after they left the organization. They took with them a public interest orientation, along with skills in investigating, exposing and combating wrongdoing that stayed with them forever.

Case in point: Mark Green, who first joined Nader's Raiders in 1972 to help assemble and write the pathbreaking bestseller *Who Runs Congress?* For several years he headed Public Citizen's Congress Watch, exposing

Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group since its founding in 1972, has been an outspoken critic of pharmaceutical industry misconduct and lax government regulators.

corruption on Capitol Hill.

Then Green moved back to his hometown, New York City. There, he set up a liberal think tank, the Democracy Project, became active in Democratic politics and was



Public Citizen file photo

Ask an activist or a politician in Texas what they think of Public Citizen, and they're likely to come up with a one-word answer: "Smitty." That's because Tom "Smitty" Smith, who has been director of Public Citizen's Texas office for 21 years, is known throughout the state as an extraordinarily skillful strategist, organizer and advocate. In this 1993 photo, Smitty stands before the scene of many of his battles – the Texas State Capitol.

From his base in Austin, Smitty has built alliances with progressives and conservatives on an array of issues, including boosting the state's commitment to renewable energy and clean air – goals on which most Texans can agree. In the process, he has made Public Citizen a political force in a conservative state.

Wade Goodwyn, the National Public Radio reporter in Dallas who has known Smitty more than 20 years, says, "He's part of the political culture and has been forever. He has a lot of credibility with the journalists in the state. An organizer builds trust, and that's what Smitty has been very good at."

named New York City's consumer affairs commissioner. In 1993 he was elected the city's first public advocate, a people's ombudsman, and was re-elected in 1997 with 70 percent of the vote. Along the way, he wrote several books, including the humorous *Reagan's Reign of Error* (1983, 1987). This year, Green is running to succeed Eliot Spitzer as New York state's attorney general.

"Public Citizen has been blessed with a long line of brilliant, imaginative people – far too many to mention – who were devoted to making our country a better place," Claybrook said. "They have demonstrated that there is no end to what people working together, using the tools of democracy, can accomplish." ■

Meet Public Citizen's Boards of Directors

Public Citizen has two boards of directors, which meet jointly twice each year. One board oversees Public Citizen Foundation, the arm of Public Citizen that focuses on research and public education. The other board oversees Public Citizen Inc., the lobbying and organizing arm. Joan Claybrook, Public Citizen's president since 1982, sits on both boards.

Public Citizen Inc.



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Joan Claybrook
President
Public Citizen

Public Citizen Foundation



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Center for Public Interest Law
University of San Diego



Lisa A. Blue
Consumer Attorney, Retired



Joseph W. Cotchett
Consumer Attorney



Morris Dees
Founder, Chief Trial Counsel
Southern Poverty Law Center



Jim Hightower
Author, Political humorist

“We Still Have So Much To Do”

Q&A With Joan Claybrook

Interview by Bob Guldin

Joan Claybrook has been president of Public Citizen for 23 years. In honor of its 35th anniversary, she takes a moment to reflect on where the organization has been and where it's going.

Public Citizen News: What impact has Public Citizen had on America over the past 35 years?

Joan Claybrook: We've certainly saved millions of lives. We've prevented death and injury from medical malpractice, unsafe drugs, unsafe cars, dirty air or nuclear power. We've changed the way the regulatory process works. When government agencies won't listen to us, we sue them if we think they've made a decision that doesn't comport with the law. These are very difficult cases to win, but we often do.

The life of the average citizen in America is substantially better because of our work, and most people don't know that we had anything to do with it. Many people are unaware, for example, that we got carcinogens out of food dyes – dyes that are eaten by almost every person in America.

PC: How would you contrast the issues and methods of Public Citizen in its early years with the work it does now?

JC: It's amazing, actually, when you compare the work we did in the '70s and '80s with the issues we work on now – a surprising number are the same. Energy policy – with the oil embargo and the growth of nuclear power – was huge in the '70s, and those are still front-page issues. One of the first government reforms we worked on was the campaign finance system; we're still working on that, though we've

expanded into lobbying reform and ethics issues. In the early '70s we worked on the impeachment of Nixon; these days we're looking into White House abuses.

Trade is a new issue for us. That started in the 1990s, with the Uruguay round of trade negotiations, when the anti-democratic World Trade Organization was established. We've been fighting trade abuses for 15 years now.

In terms of tactics, we have a lot more capability. When we started out we used a mimeograph machine, because we couldn't afford a Xerox. Long-distance phone service was extremely expensive, so it was rationed. That hampered our ability to do nationwide organizing.

Of course, we didn't have the Internet or computers. So any time we typed something up, that was the final copy.

While that may seem primitive, it had some advantages. At Congress Watch, which I headed in the '70s, out of necessity we had to put everything on one piece of paper. Our arguments were synthesized, condensed. But that turned out to be an advantage. I noticed that members of Congress would take that paper, fold it in thirds, and stick it in their breast pockets. I remember thinking – that's exactly what we want – to get into the breast pocket of every member of Congress. When they take off their coat, there's our stuff!

PC: What direction would you like to see Public Citizen go during the next five to 10 years?



Photo by Valerie Collins

JC: First of all, I'd like us to have more resources. We're very frugal, and our salaries are really not high enough currently to attract and retain people making this work a career, especially when they have children. Washington's an expensive place to live.

And we need to expand our grassroots work – it provides the clout we need, because we don't give campaign money.

I would also like to see us get back into tax issues, in addition to the areas we currently work on. There is really no progressive citizen lobby on taxes. We used to have a tax group in the '70s and '80s, but we just couldn't keep it going financially. There needs to be a real tax watchdog and activism on the issue, because so much money is siphoned out of the federal treasury through special tax loopholes.

PC: From a personal viewpoint, what do you hope to do over the next five to 10 years?

JC: Leading Public Citizen has been my work for 25 years, and that tenure has brought stability to the organization. But it's always important to have new blood and vibrancy.

I want to develop a new generation of leaders and give the organization greater financial support, so we can continue as hard-hitting advocates.

PC: You've been seen many times working in your office at Public Citizen until midnight and beyond. What keeps you going so vigorously after all these years?

JC: (*Laughs*) I like to win. I'm very competitive. And I know that if I do my job right, it's multiplied many times over by the people in this organization. We're a very

vigorous and active group, and every day I'm given more to achieve than I can handle, even though we have so many talented lawyers, doctors, writers, researchers and advocates. We all work hard. That's part of Public Citizen's profile.

PC: What has personally given you the most satisfaction in your time at the organization?

JC: I'm so proud of Public Citizen's many accomplishments over the years. For example, removing bad drugs from the market, which has saved people's lives. Our 51 arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court; that's a record that's hard to match. Our turning around the international trade debate – the work we did in Seattle in 1999 for the first time brought to broad public attention the danger of these trade agreements. Our challenge to nuclear power. Our enforcement of the Freedom of Information Act in over 300 lawsuits. Our success in pressing for campaign finance reform.

Of the issues I've personally worked on, I would definitely say air bags and pushing automotive fuel economy and truck safety have been very close to my heart. Air bags is perhaps the easiest one to mention, because everyone has one now, they know how they save lives and prevent injuries. What most people don't know is it took 20 years of fighting with the auto industry to get them to install them, and we were at the forefront of that battle. And it's a huge success story.

Of course, we still have so much to do. Right now, for example, we're challenging unethical behavior by lobbyists and members of Congress, trying to limit business-legislator collusion.

And we keep fighting for American citizens to have full access to the courts. Big business hates being taken to court and has spent billions in the last two decades to pass laws closing the courthouse doors to citizens.

PC: You're taking steps to make sure that the history of Public Citizen over its 35 years is archived, recorded and celebrated. Why is that?

JC: I have an even broader interest, which is the public interest movement. I see myself in part as a teacher, and I really want young people to understand the crucial roles public interest organizations play in our society. Our democracy, our health, our environment, are all influenced every day by public interest organizations.

Public Citizen has never been wealthy, because we don't take any government or corporate money and we challenge business and government ethics all the time. Yet we've survived and even thrived for 35 years, and have had a tremendous impact on American society. I want other people to understand how we did this, so they can do similar work. I'm most interested in the living history of Public Citizen. ■

35 Years of Saving Lives

The Good Fight

Peter Lurie was a medical student in 1984 when he decided to spend a year working with Dr. Sidney Wolfe at Public Citizen's Health Research Group. One of his projects involved Public Citizen's effort to persuade the Food and Drug Administration to require that labels on aspirin bottles warn users the drug could cause a disease called Reye's Syndrome in children who were suffering from chicken pox or the flu. **The disease often caused death or brain damage, but the aspirin industry resisted the call for warning labels.**

One day Wolfe came into Lurie's office, put his arm around the student and announced, "We won." It was a moment Lurie, now a physician and deputy director of the Health Research Group, never forgot.

"It was significant because I'd spent a lot of time being an activist on several issues – nuclear, Central America, etc. – and we just never won," Lurie recalled. "It taught me there were ways you could actually be an activist and be successful, that you could pinch off pieces of this bigger

social problem, identify them, bring data to bear on them, and then you could win. Once you know you can win once, it's completely addictive, and all you want to do is keep on winning."

By the next year, the aspirin warning labels were mandatory. Because of the labeling and the publicity from the battle, Reye's Syndrome was virtually eradicated in the United States. Previously, there had been as many as 5,000 new cases each year.

While winning was new to Lurie, Wolfe had been experiencing it regularly since he co-founded the Health Research Group in 1971. For 35 years, the Health Research Group and the rest of Public Citizen have demonstrated that "people power" can overcome long odds and defeat the powerful corporate interests that often hold sway in the halls of power.

Frank Clemente, director of Public Citizen's Congress Watch, at a 2001 rally of senior citizens demanding relief from high prescription drug prices.



Public Citizen file photo



Public Citizen file photo

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER: Public Citizen activists on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in the late 1990s protest the influence of big moneyed interests on congressional politics. Public Citizen has battled for years to break the grip that corporate America has on Congress. A major victory came in 2002 with the passage of the McCain-Feingold Act, the first major campaign finance reform since the Watergate era.

With its innumerable victories – in the courts, in Congress, in the regulatory agencies and elsewhere – Public Citizen has left its indelible fingerprints on American life.

When, for example, an airline passenger is compensated for being bumped from an overbooked flight, it is because Public Citizen won its lawsuit against Allegheny Airlines in the 1970s.

When historians or journalists listen to the hundreds of hours of once-secret audiotapes from the Nixon White House, it is because Public Citizen litigators forced the government to make the tapes public – and that took 15 years of persistent pressure.

When workers handle toxic substances like ethylene oxide, cadmium and hexavalent chromium in the workplace, they can thank Public Citizen for forcing the government to enact stronger exposure standards to protect workers from these and other chemicals.

When a consumer is able to shop for the best price for routine legal services, it is because Public Citizen won a Supreme Court case

outlawing price-fixing by lawyers.

In many ways, the impact of Public Citizen’s work on health and safety is incalculable. There is no way to know how many deaths and injuries from adverse drug effects have been averted because of the Health Research’s Group’s efforts to remove dangerous drugs from the marketplace. Eighteen drugs – including painkillers Suprol, Tandearil and Vioxx, the diabetes drug Rezulin, the diet drug Redux and the irritable bowel medication Lotronex – have been taken off the market after Public Citizen petitioned the FDA. In late 2003, the FDA banned the dietary supplement ephedra after a two-year campaign.

Similarly, no one can say how many lives have been saved because of Public Citizen President Joan Claybrook’s decades of work to improve automobile and truck safety. Claybrook, who headed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) under President Jimmy Carter, has been a driving force for safer cars and trucks since she worked with Ralph Nader to craft the nation’s first automobile



Photo by Brendan Hoffman

PUTTING NUKES ON ICE: To dramatize the danger of a nuclear “meltdown,” activists in Mississippi in 2005 sculpted a nuclear power reactor out of ice.

“Public Citizen should be commended for its tireless work to uncover government wrongdoing, strengthen campaign finance rules, alert the media to lawmakers’ ethical missteps and otherwise champion the interests of consumers. For 35 years, Public Citizen’s watchdogging skills have been vital to our democracy.”

Susan Sarandon, actress and activist
Public Citizen member



Public Citizen file photo

THE LITIGATORS: Former and current Litigation Group lawyers at a reunion in 2003. Front row: left to right: Marka Peterson, Allison Zieve, Brian Wolfman and Alan Morrison. Back row: John Sims, Bill Schultz, Paul Wolfson, Kerry Scanlon, Arthur Fox, Kathy Meyer, David Vladeck, Con Hitchcock, Eric Glitzenstein, Larry Ellsworth, Paul Levy, Michael Tankersley, Scott Nelson and Gerry Spann.

safety legislation in the mid-1960s.

Under Claybrook's watch, Public Citizen's Auto Safety Group has won numerous battles to improve highway safety. The organization played a key role in persuading Congress in 1991 to pass legislation to mandate air bags, and then in 1998 to require safer air bags to protect women and children (after auto companies cut corners and sold unsafe ones); to improve truck safety, in 1999; and to beef up inspections for trucks entering the United States from Mexico, in 2001.

In 2000, Claybrook seized upon reports of a rash of rollover crashes involving Ford Explorers equipped with Firestone tires to push the companies to recall the defective tires in the United States, which they did after a national uproar fed in part by Public Citizen's dogged pursuit of the truth. Claybrook's work helped spur Congress to pass the TREAD Act in 2000, safety legislation designed to upgrade tire standards and beef up the reporting of auto defects by the industry. And this past year, after a

"Public Citizen has been an important partner in our work to reform campaign finance laws. Their advocacy is helping to make our government more accountable and transparent."

U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.)



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years-long campaign by Claybrook and her allies, Congress passed a raft of new safety improvements to protect occupants in rollover crashes and other types of crashes.

Public Citizen's achievements span a wide range of other issues besides health and safety. One of the organization's most important goals is to protect the principles of democracy and enhance citizen participation in government. This work has led to a long string of achievements.

In the 1970s, Claybrook co-founded Public Citizen's Congress Watch division to serve as the organization's presence on Capitol Hill and press for democratic reforms. In 1974, as the Watergate scandal was unfolding, the group began to push hard to secure campaign finance reforms, particularly public funding of presidential elections, and to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the primary law that allowed citizens to find out what was going on in their



Photo by Jeffrey Vinson

FAIR TRADE, not corporate-sponsored free trade, has been a major Public Citizen emphasis since the 1990s. Above, Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch, at a 2001 demonstration.

government. What was new and different about FOIA – even as first passed in 1966 – was that it set up a *legal presumption* that the federal government should disclose information when people requested it. It required federal agencies, if they refused to make records public, to show why that information should not be released.

In 1974, recognizing that FOIA had many weaknesses, Public Citizen, working with Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), led the successful campaign to reform and strengthen the law. The new FOIA, for example, waived searching and copying fees if

the disclosures were judged to be “primarily benefiting the general public” and required disclosure of investigatory information known to the defendant in criminal matters.

Claybrook recalls, “We pored over every bit of language in the bill, talked to every member of the House and Senate

Public Citizen file photo



Making Books

Over its 35 years, Public Citizen has published numerous of books on consumer and public interest topics. Beyond a doubt, the organization's best seller has been *Worst Pills, Best Pills*, which has sold more than 2.2 million copies in five editions. (Above, Sidney Wolfe presenting a new edition of that book.)

Following is a sample of Public Citizen's literary output.

Worst Pills, Best Pills: A Consumer's Guide to Avoiding Drug-Induced Death or Illness (2005)

Courting Change: The History of the Public Citizen Litigation Group (2004)

Whose Trade Organization? Comprehensive Guide to the WTO (2004)

Questionable Doctors (2000)

Whose Trade Organization? The World Trade Organization and the Erosion of Democracy (1999)

Women's Health Alert (1991)

Who Robbed America? A Citizen's Guide to the Savings and Loan Scandal (1990)

Freedom from Harm: The Civilizing Influence of Health, Safety and Environmental Regulation (1986)

Retreat from Safety: Reagan's Attack on America's Health (1984)

Over the Counter Pills That Don't Work (1983)

Representing Yourself (1983)

Pills That Don't Work (1980)



Public Citizen's Hidden Hits

Public Citizen has had a broad impact on American life since its founding in 1971. But in some instances few people know that Public Citizen was the catalyst for change. A few examples:

Get the Red Out

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned Red Dye No. 2, a carcinogenic food coloring, in 1976 following a four-year campaign by Public Citizen. Studies had shown a relationship between the food dye and cancer. The next year, Public Citizen followed up with petitions to ban 32 food, drug and cosmetic dyes, including two carcinogens and seven suspected carcinogens.

The "Saturday Night Massacre"

A key moment in the Watergate scandal came on Oct. 20, 1973, when President Richard M. Nixon ordered Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Archibald Cox, the special prosecutor who was demanding access to the tapes of conversations that were secretly recorded in the White House. Richardson refused, resigning instead. Deputy Attorney General William French Smith also resigned rather than carry out the order. Nixon then turned to Solicitor General Robert F. Bork, who carried out the order. Public Citizen sued the White House, contending the firing was illegal. A federal court sided with Public Citizen in November 1973.

Although Cox didn't get his job back (he would not join the case), the legal victory showed the president had violated the law, further isolating Nixon and helping to lead to Nixon's eventual resignation.

Air Bags

Perhaps the Public Citizen campaign that has made the biggest day-to-day difference in the lives of Americans is the successful battle to require air bags in cars and trucks. Here, Joan Claybrook's expertise in the field (she was head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration during the Carter administration) carried considerable weight. Public Citizen played a key role in persuading Congress in 1991 to pass legislation to mandate air bags, and then in 1998 to require safer air bags to protect women and children – after it became evident that the auto manufacturers were at first cutting corners and providing unsafe air bags.

Toxic Shock Syndrome

In 1989, Public Citizen scored a victory for consumers when it obtained a court order forcing the FDA to require labels on tampon boxes warning women that high-absorbency tampons were more likely to cause toxic shock syndrome, a serious bacterial infection.

Overbooked Flights

One day in 1972, Allegheny Airlines bumped Ralph Nader from a flight – a common practice at the time. Every year, tens of thousands of travelers were bumped from flights because of what the airlines called "space-planning," i.e., overbooking.

Public Citizen and Nader sued to stop this abusive practice, and eventually won at the Supreme Court. Their victory led to the current system under which passengers are compensated for volunteering to give up their seats.



Public Citizen file photo

PUBLIC CITIZEN LITIGATOR Alan Morrison briefs reporters in April 2004 on the front steps of the U.S. Supreme Court. He had just argued a case on behalf of the Sierra Club, which attempted to pry open the lid of secrecy on Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force.

Judiciary Committees and more extensively to every member of the conference committee."

Though President Gerald Ford vetoed the legislation shortly after he became president, Public Citizen, Kennedy and their allies mustered enough congressional votes to override the veto.

The strengthened FOIA law has been critical to Public Citizen's success in ferreting out information from the government, which is often needed to uncover malfeasance or press for safeguards involving health, safety or the environment.

Congress Watch continued pressing for reforms over the decades, pointing out abuses of power by members of Congress, for instance, and issuing investigative reports linking campaign contributions with specific legislative actions. One of its biggest accomplishments was the passage of the McCain-Feingold Act of 2002, the first major campaign finance reform since the Watergate era.

For more than a decade, Public Citizen worked with other reform groups in Washington to enact legislation to ban the unregulated, corrupting "soft money" that corporations, unions and wealthy individuals gave to the political parties. Congress Watch worked at the grassroots level to mobilize voters, gathering tens of thousands of petitions signed by people in every state and forwarding them to lawmakers. And then, Public Citizen was



Public Citizen file photos

ATTORNEY GENERAL Janet Reno chatting with David Vladeck in 1995. Vladeck was a Public Citizen litigator for 25 years and headed the Litigation Group from 1993 to 2002.



JOAN CLAYBROOK TESTIFIES Sept. 12, 2000, at a Senate hearing investigating Firestone tire safety, after the tires were discovered to be prone to tread separations that often led to catastrophic rollover crashes, especially on Ford Explorers. Public Citizen leadership was vital in passing the TREAD Act that year, a law improving tire safety.

part of the legal team that successfully defended the law at the Supreme Court.

The Litigation Group also has played a major role in many of Public Citizen's successes, often suing government agencies for information, challenging substandard safety regulations in court or representing clients with cases of significant public interest. Its lawyers have litigated more than 300 FOIA cases and have argued 51 cases in the U.S. Supreme Court, winning about 55 percent. The group's Supreme Court victories have included decisions outlawing the "legislative veto," protecting the rights of citizens to sue over defective products; striking down the Gramm-Rudman balanced budget amendment and applying First Amendment protection to commercial speech.

Other Public Citizen divisions, as well, have achieved significant results.

The Critical Mass Energy Program, established after Public Citizen hosted the first national conference of anti-nuclear activists in 1974, played a major role in organizing citizens to stop the spread of nuclear power in the 1970s. More recently, the group has effectively challenged moving nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain in Nevada. Its campaign to stop food irradiation has succeeded in persuading school boards and consumers across the nation to reject irradiated ground beef on the grounds that too little is known about the possible health impacts.

The Global Trade Watch division, established in 1995, has educated Americans about the nature of current global trade pacts like North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization. These trade agreements,

written in large part to benefit multinational corporations, contain provisions that undermine health, safety, environmental, labor and civil rights safeguards, and limit the democratic rights of citizens in the United States and abroad. This division of Public Citizen was a key organizer of the massive WTO demonstration in Seattle in 1999, which served to awaken Americans to the threat of such trade agreements.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the members who have generously supported the organization through the years.

"For 35 years, Public Citizen has battled for citizens against corporate and government abuse, and its victories are those of its members," Claybrook said. "They are the real heroes of the consumer movement, the credit belongs to them, and any future Public Citizen success will be due to their generous support." ■

"Public Citizen is the K Street of the people. Its work (unlike that of the lobbyists who wish it would go away) is on record for all to see. It is the proud record of patriotic people of conscience."

Phil Donahue
TV host, activist
Public Citizen member



Year By Year: 1971-2006



Photo by Byron Bloch

1971

Ralph Nader founds Public Citizen as an organization dedicated to protecting health, safety and democracy.

Public Citizen persuades Congress to override President Ford's veto and pass major improvements to the Freedom of Information Act.

Look closely at the illustration above and you will see not only the words "Public Citizen," but numerous interconnected images reflecting our work and our 35th anniversary. We are deeply indebted to artist Don Stewart, who donated this piece. Prints of his brain-teasing drawings, all done in ballpoint ink, can be viewed and purchased at www.dsart.com.

1972

Public Citizen plays key role in creation of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

1973

In response to Public Citizen's lawsuit, President Nixon's firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox is ruled illegal.



1974

Public Citizen legal action forces OSHA to limit workplace exposure to 10 common carcinogens.

A nuclear catastrophe is too big a price for our electric bill.

Ralph Nader calls a national meeting of citizens to stop the development of nuclear power until it can be proven safe.

Critical Mass74

Public Citizen organizes Critical Mass '74, the first national conference of anti-nuclear energy activists, taking its name from the industry's own jargon.

1975

Public Citizen wins Supreme Court ruling forbidding lawyers and other professionals from fixing prices.

Public Citizen wins Supreme Court decision barring the president from refusing to spend, or "impounding," funds appropriated by Congress.

1976

FDA bans Red Dye No. 2 after Public Citizen's four-year campaign against the carcinogenic food dye.

Public Citizen wins landmark Supreme Court ruling that First Amendment applies to commercial speech, overturning a Virginia law that prohibited pharmacists from advertising prescription drug prices.



Public Citizen wins Supreme Court case upholding airline passengers' rights to sue for damages when bumped from flights for which they had confirmed reservations.

1977

Public Citizen mobilizes citizens who persuade President Carter to halt construction of Clinch River breeder reactor.



1978

Congress passes Public Citizen's National Consumer Cooperative Bill authorizing \$300 million in seed money for consumer cooperatives.

Public Citizen files class action suit on behalf of 1,100 women who were given the drug DES (which increases risk of breast cancer) without their knowledge in 1950s as part of a University of Chicago medical experiment.

1979

Public Citizen wins landmark case in New York, striking down residency requirements preventing lawyers from working in the state, thereby allowing greater competition.

1980

Public Citizen magazine debuts, giving members regular updates on Public Citizen issues and activities.



1981

Public Citizen urges FDA to ban misleading advertising for popular drug Valium; company withdraws advertising.

1982

After an extensive Public Citizen campaign, cancer-causing urea formaldehyde is banned in home insulation.

1983

Public Citizen wins historic separation-of-powers case when Supreme Court strikes down legislative veto, affecting more than 200 statutes.

Public Citizen participates in landmark Supreme Court decision overturning President Reagan's revocation of auto safety standards for automatic restraints such as air bags.

1984

Public Citizen successfully challenges Southwest Bell's huge telephone rate increase, imposed right after telephone deregulation. After that victory, Public Citizen opens a field office in Austin, Texas.

Public Citizen publishes *Retreat from Safety*, a book exposing Reagan administration efforts to roll back health and safety regulations.

Phil Donahue helped spread the word about *Worst Pills, Best Pills* on his TV talk show

1985

Public Citizen lobbying halts legislative attack on the right of consumers to hold manufacturers accountable for damage done by dangerous products.

1986

After lengthy Public Citizen campaign, FDA requires aspirin makers to include labels warning that aspirin can cause rare Reye's Syndrome in children suffering from chicken pox or flu, virtually eliminating this source of death and injury in children.

Supreme Court rules in favor of Public Citizen lawsuit, declaring that Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction law violates Constitution's separation-of-powers doctrine.

1987



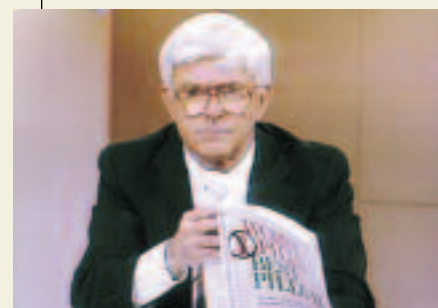
Public Citizen publishes research about Judge Robert Bork's decisions in the Court of Appeals, helping block his confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Public Citizen obtains court order directing chemical producers of Agent Orange to make important information available to public.

1988

After seven years of litigation by Public Citizen, OSHA imposes standards for worker exposure to cancer-causing gas ethylene oxide, used to sterilize hospital equipment.

Public Citizen publishes first edition of *Worst Pills, Best Pills*, a consumer guide to dangerous and ineffective drugs and their safer alternatives, selling 2 million copies over the next 10 years.



1989

Federal regulation requiring air bags or passive seat belts in all cars takes effect after a 20-year battle with auto makers.

Public Citizen and Ralph Nader lead successful opposition to \$45,500 congressional pay raise initiated by President Reagan as he steps down, forcing Congress to take a smaller raise and ban honoraria.

1990

Public Citizen launches the Supreme Court Assistance Project to assist lawyers with public interest cases pending in the Supreme Court.

Public Citizen publishes *Who Robbed America?*, a guide to the savings and loan scandal that cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

1991

Public Citizen plays key role in passage of new auto and truck safety law requiring air bags and head injury protections, and limiting the expansion of big rigs.

Public Citizen publishes *They Love To Fly ... And It Shows*, exposing House members who took nearly 4,000 privately funded trips in 1989-90.

1992

Public Citizen exposes links between campaign contributions and actions taken by Vice President Dan Quayle's Council on Competitiveness to weaken health, safety and environmental standards, undercutting the credibility of his attacks.

1993

Public Citizen wins landmark court victory preventing destruction of electronic records of the White House under Presidents Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Clinton, including e-mails of Iran-Contra figure Oliver North.



1994

Public Citizen moves into its new headquarters building just north of Dupont Circle at 20th and Q streets in Washington, D.C. The building was purchased at half price during a savings and loan liquidation fire sale. At right, Joan Claybrook christens the new headquarters.



1995

Public Citizen launches a new division, Global Trade Watch, to protect public interest safeguards in international trade deals such as NAFTA.



Public Citizen takes lead role in organizing coalition that successfully blocks massive industry push to enact elements of the GOP's Contract for America, designed to roll back health and safety protections.

1996

Public Citizen forges historic settlement to secure release of Nixon's secret White House tapes after 15 years of litigation.

1997

Public Citizen protests and helps force redesign of unethical AIDS research in Africa, which would have denied known effective treatment to HIV-positive pregnant women.

1998

Public Citizen helps lead a global citizens' campaign that results in the scuttling of the Multilateral Agreement on Investments, a proposed global investment treaty.

1999

Public Citizen publishes *Whose Trade Organization? Corporate Globalization and the Erosion of Democracy*, a book exposing the WTO's five-year record of weakening health, safety, environmental and labor standards.

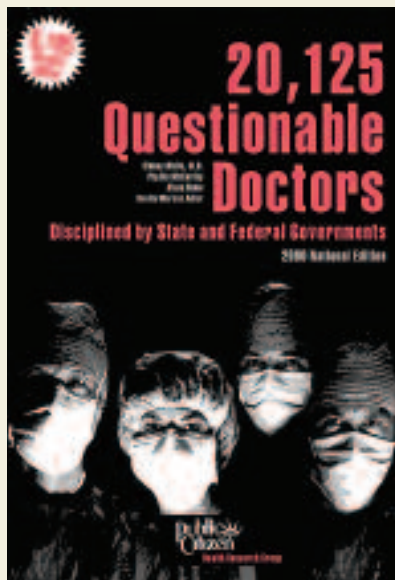
Public Citizen leads global coalition to organize massive, landmark demonstrations in Seattle against the unaccountable, undemocratic World Trade Organization.



Demonstration in Seattle, November 1999

Public Citizen works successfully to pass major truck safety legislation, which creates the new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to replace the ineffective Office of Motor Carriers.

2000



2000 edition of the book *Questionable Doctors*

A Public Citizen petition leads to a ban on the diabetes drug Rezulin after 63 deaths from liver toxicity.

Public Citizen, spearheading a coalition of auto safety advocates, wins new federal legislation to strengthen safety and improve disclosure of potential defects in wake of hundreds of deaths and injuries caused by rollover crashes involving Firestone tires and Ford Explorers.



2001

Public Citizen wins passage of legislation to beef up inspections of Mexican trucks entering U.S. under NAFTA. Consequently, Mexican trucks have never been permitted to travel more than 20 miles from the border.

Public Citizen wins appellate court ruling protecting privacy rights of Internet users who anonymously post comments critical of corporations.

2002

Congress passes first major campaign finance reform since Watergate era – banning “soft money” and regulating phony “issue ads” – following decade-long battle by Public Citizen and allies.



2003

FDA bans the dietary supplement ephedra two years after Public Citizen petitions for its removal and after 155 deaths.

Public Citizen wins Court of Appeals decision overruling U.S. Department of Transportation’s weak standard for a dashboard monitor of tire inflation.

2004

In a major win for highway safety, Public Citizen secures federal appeals court victory striking down a Bush administration regulation that increased the number of consecutive and weekly hours that truck drivers could drive without rest.

2005

A Public Citizen petition and overwhelming evidence force FDA to remove dangerous pain drug Bextra from the market.



Logo from successful 2005 campaign to force Tom DeLay from his post as House Majority Leader

After years of Public Citizen lobbying, Congress passes major auto safety improvements, including stability and roof-strength standards, in 2005 highway bill.

Texas legislature in special session votes to double the state’s goal for producing energy from renewable resources, after campaign led by Public Citizen’s Texas office. Below, Tom “Smitty” Smith, longtime director of Public Citizen in Texas, speaking at the State Capitol.



2006

Public Citizen lawyers win federal lawsuit on behalf of Spanish-speaking workers displaced by NAFTA, forcing U.S. Department of Labor to provide better job training under Trade Adjustment Assistance program.

Public Citizen launches Clean Up Washington campaign to pressure Congress to enact meaningful lobbying reforms in the wake of bribery and influence-peddling scandals engulfing the capital.



Fighting On All Fronts

From the streets to the Internet to the Supreme Court, Public Citizen uses every conceivable tool to win victories for health, safety and democracy.

When Ralph Nader launched Public Citizen, he wanted to give the organization – and the consumers it represented – a strong voice in Washington, D.C. The voice needed to compete with that of corporate America and sway a political system dominated by entrenched economic interests.

Nader devised a simple but brilliant scheme: Use the system in much the same way corporations used it – but harness that power on behalf of consumers to beat big business at its own game. That meant hiring an interdisciplinary team of lawyers, doctors, researchers, lobbyists, organizers, public relations experts and administrators – all to work toward common goals. At the same time, he established various arms of Public Citizen with a minimum of bureaucracy, enabling them to react quickly to emerging issues and threats.

“If corporations can lobby Congress, Public Citizen can lobby Congress,” Nader said. “If they can attack the safety regulatory agencies, Public Citizen can challenge those attacks. If they can use the courts, Public Citizen can use the courts. If they’re going to use the media or if they control the media, Public Citizen will use the media. You always have to go after all fronts.”

Public Citizen has done just that. Over the past 35 years, Public Citizen has used a panoply of tools to strengthen and enact consumer protections and hold government and corporations accountable to the



SPEAKING OUT: Public Citizen has never been reluctant to use those powers of government. In Seattle in 1999, the organization helped pull together a

public. The organization conducts extensive investigations to uncover new and startling information, widely publicizes the information, challenges anti-consumer laws and regulations in the courts, petitions regulatory agencies, publishes consumer information, lobbies members of Congress and, now, uses the Internet to spread the organization’s message further – and in a more targeted fashion – than ever before.

Often, some or all of these tools are brought to bear on a single issue. Public Citizen may try to strengthen a safety standard, for example, by petitioning an agency but then will go to court if the agency is unresponsive. If litigation doesn’t lead to the desired result, the organization may go to Congress and mobilize



Photo Jim Levitt, GlobalAware

precious tools guaranteed by the Constitution – the right to assemble and to petition the broad coalition to expose problems with globalization and the WTO.

supporters via the Internet to prompt the passage of new legislation.

“We are extraordinarily effective at what we do because we can tap lawyers, investigative researchers and legislative experts,” Public Citizen President Joan Claybrook said. “We know how the system works and we are proud to enhance democracy by using its processes to accomplish our public interest goals.”

The Muckrakers

When Nader first got started, he shocked the political establishment by releasing exposés on auto safety defects, unsanitary practices in meat and poultry factories, the hazards of natural gas pipelines, radiation risks from X-rays and dangerous working conditions in coal mines. In subsequent years, he and a cadre of investigators, dubbed “Nader’s Raiders,” produced investigative books and

reports on a host of government agencies and issues, such as the Food and Drug Administration’s lax oversight of the food industry and incompetence at the now-defunct Interstate Commerce Commission.

Though Nader left the organization in 1980 and has had no official role since then, Public Citizen inherited the muckraking tradition and is still digging to produce reports, analyses and books that literally can turn the tide of a public debate or spark government action to remedy a public health threat.

Take the debate over skyrocketing medical malpractice insurance rates, which insurers and doctors erroneously say are caused by lawsuits filed by injured patients. In 2003, the debate came to a head in Congress as President Bush and GOP congressional leaders pushed to enact a \$250,000 limit on the amount juries could award to medical negligence victims for their pain and suffering.

Public Citizen amassed data from the federal government and states, releasing more than a dozen reports documenting declining malpractice lawsuits and payments to victims, showing that the rising rates were due not to the court system but rather to the economic cycle and the business practices of insurers. The data demonstrated that just 5 percent of doctors in the country were responsible for more than half (54 percent) of all malpractice payments. This new evidence reinforced Public Citizen’s argument that the best way to rein in malpractice premiums is to crack down on negligent doctors – not strip innocent patients of their legal rights. The “5 percent” statistic was picked up by hundreds of journalists covering the debate, and the bill was defeated.

Public Citizen engages in constant research to make its case when pressing for reforms. The Health Research Group frequently uses the Freedom of Information Act to gather and analyze information about adverse drug events reported to the agency and uses the information to petition to take dangerous drugs off the market. The Congress Watch division crunches lobbying data to learn how much money various industries have poured into campaign coffers of federal candidates and what legislative favors they have received in exchange. When agencies don’t respond

“Public Citizen is an effective voice protecting the fundamental rights of all Americans, and I commend them for their vigilance, their leadership and their impressive representation of the public interest over the past 35 years.”

U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.)



to requests for information, the Litigation Group takes them to court.

Taking It To the Streets

Sometimes, “people power” is needed to effect political change. That’s where Public Citizen organizers come into play. One of Public Citizen’s most spectacular organizing successes began in the mid-1990s, when its Global Trade Watch division began building an international coalition to counter the threat of trade agreements that increasingly infringed on domestic policies designed to protect consumers and the environment. That work paid off in 1999 when 50,000 demonstrators marched in Seattle to protest the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) anti-democratic policies. The mass protest opened the eyes of millions of Americans, many of whom had never heard of the WTO.



Public Citizen file photos

FROM THE SENATE TO THE STREETS: Public Citizen has a varied toolbox, from working with progressive lawmakers like Sen. Edward Kennedy, to rallying with labor against improved trade terms for China (right), to using animal mascots such as the Fat Cat and Joe Camel to protest the improper influence of Big Tobacco on lawmakers.



We’ve Come a Long Way In 35 Years...

For over three decades Public Citizen has depended upon you for support. Today, you can help us prepare for unexpected bumps and hidden curves in the road ahead by making a planned gift.

If you’re considering putting Public Citizen in your will or trust, or if you’re interested in receiving a life income through a charitable gift annuity (some restrictions may apply), please telephone Suzanne Whitmore at 1-800-999-1906 or email her at swhitmore@citizen.org.

...And We Have a Long Way To Go.



Public Investigators

In a political system where the rich, corrupt and powerful try to hide the truth about their misdeeds, one of Public Citizen's strongest weapons is the exposé.

Penetrating investigations have become a hallmark of the organization's activism. Many have been issued as reports that generated headlines and made a real difference in policy debates, legislation and consumer safety regulation. Here are four that achieved that kind of impact.

Exposing Judge Bork

When President Reagan in 1987 nominated Robert Bork to fill a vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court, he described his nominee as a reasonable Republican. But the Public Citizen Litigation Group published a 96-page report detailing Bork's ultra-conservative, pro-big business positions on numerous controversial issues that he had staked out in his decisions on the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The Judicial Record of Judge Robert H. Bork became the basic text for the massive media and grassroots campaigns that eventually succeeded in blocking the Bork nomination – and preventing the Court from taking a hard turn against citizens and consumers in the Reagan years.

They Love to Fly

Members of Congress have long enjoyed the privilege of going on free and sometimes luxurious junkets, but Public Citizen has worked consistently and successfully to rein in this abusive congressional practice.

In 1987 and 1988, Public Citizen found that U.S. senators had taken more than 1,000 trips funded by corporations, lobbyists and other interests. Often the senators would be taken to fancy resorts and paid thousands of dollars for their appearances. In part because of the exposure generated by Public Citizen and our subsequent opposition to a gigantic congressional pay raise, Congress banned these stipends in 1989.

Abuses continue, with members of Congress accepting lavish trips paid for by private parties. But it seems likely in 2006 that they will be severely curtailed, after disclosures that lobbyist Jack Abramoff and others funded congressional travel to luxurious resorts.

Questionable Doctors

Until recently, consumers had virtually no ready access to information about the competency of their doctors. So in the late 1980s, Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group, decided to publish a national compendium of physicians who had been disciplined by their state medical boards or federal agencies.

Public Citizen published the first edition in 1990 and called it *6,892 Questionable Doctors*. The book listed physicians who had run afoul of criminal and ethics rules for offenses such as misprescribing drugs, having improper sexual relations with patients, negligence and incompetence. It proved so popular that Public Citizen put out several updated editions. The sixth and final edition was *20,125 Questionable Doctors*, published in 2000. Most of that information is now available to consumers through Web sites hosted by state medical boards.

Nuclear Lemons

After the nuclear accidents at Three Mile Island in 1979 and Chernobyl in 1986, the American people wanted solid information about the safety or lack thereof of nuclear plants.

In 1986, Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy Project published the *1979-1985 Nuclear Power Safety Report*, which documented the safety performance of every reactor in the country and listed 20,000 mishaps.

Two years later, the group published *Who's At the Controls?*, a report exposing the refusal of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to comply with laws governing worker training. Public Citizen has continued to hold the nuclear industry accountable, often forcing improvements in safety performance while raising broader issues about the long-term safety and economic efficiency of the entire nuclear enterprise.

“Public Citizen is fiercely and funnily truthful. If I could eat it, I would. But I have to be content just to devour it by sight to fill my soul with hope and joy. Write on forever.”

Malachy McCourt
Actor and author
Public Citizen member



Public Citizen file photo

“Democracy requires not just agitation, but information and organization as well. Public Citizen offers all three in one potent package.”

Jim Hightower
Author, Texan, political humorist
Member, Public Citizen Foundation Board of Directors

MIKE WALLACE and Public Citizen’s Dr. Sidney Wolfe (facing away from camera) discuss dangerous medications on CBS’s “60 Minutes” in 1981. Public Citizen has a vigorous media outreach program, and in a typical week is mentioned or quoted in hundreds of articles, radio and TV news programs and Web sites.

Public Citizen’s Critical Mass Energy Program also harnessed the power of people when fighting water privatization, which takes water resources and delivery systems out of public hands and turns them into commodities for sale to the highest bidder. Since business conglomerates were moving into cities and counties to take over water systems, Public Citizen helped organize local citizens to fight back in such places as Atlanta, New Orleans and Lexington, Ky. Similarly, Public Citizen has for years organized local communities to oppose the expansion of nuclear reactors in their communities.

People’s Lobbyists

Money buys access in Washington, and corporate lobbyists are often



Public Citizen file photo

Public Citizen and the Supreme Court

In November 2005, Public Citizen passed a milestone when it argued its 50th case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Since the Public Citizen Litigation Group was established in 1972, its attorneys have argued a wide variety of cases before the Court, winning almost 60 percent.

PUBLIC CITIZEN LITIGATORS at the U.S. Supreme Court in 1988: (left to right) Con Hitchcock, Paul Levy and Eric Glitzenstein. All three argued cases before the Court that year.

But Public Citizen’s impact on Supreme Court decision-making goes far beyond the cases it actually argues. Through the Alan Morrison Supreme Court Assistance Project (SCAP), Public Citizen litigators with Supreme Court experience help outside attorneys who are fighting for good causes prepare their cases. During a typical Supreme Court term, SCAP is involved, on average, in 15 to 20 cases out of the 75 or so the Court hears.

A few of the Public Citizen Litigation Group successes:

- **Lee v. Kemna (2002)** – The Court ruled a defendant was denied his right to a fair trial when the trial judge refused to grant him an overnight continuance to locate three subpoenaed alibi witnesses who unexpectedly, and for reasons not attributable to the defendant, did not return after a lunch break on the last day of the trial.
- **Medtronic, Inc v. Lohr (1996)** – The Court ruled that federal law regulating government approval of medical devices does not prevent consumers injured by defective products from suing manufacturers for damages under state laws.
- **Helling v. McKinney (1993)** – The Court ruled that the Eighth Amendment prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment applies to prisoners who face health dangers from being confined in a cell with a heavy smoker.
- **INS v. Chada (1983)** – Landmark decision that the provision allowing either house of Congress to veto administrative agency actions (dubbed the legislative veto) is a violation of the Constitution’s separation of powers.
- **Campaign Clean Water v. Train (1975)** – The Court ruled that the president does not have the power to refuse to spend money appropriated by Congress unless specifically authorized by Congress to do so.



Public Citizen file photo

IT TOOK TEN YEARS of nonstop advocacy, but reformers finally got the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill through Congress in 2002. Here, Joan Claybrook meets with congressional allies (left to right) Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.), Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Rep. Marty Meehan (D-Mass.) in 2002 to deliver thousands of Public Citizen petitions.

able to make appointments with federal lawmakers, while ordinary citizens rarely get such an audience. But Public Citizen, though it doesn't give campaign contributions or hire corporate lobbying firms, makes sure the voice of consumers is heard on Capitol Hill. Claybrook works the halls of Congress hard whenever key legislation affecting consumers is up for a vote.

Rob Sanders has seen Claybrook in action. He lost his 7-year-old daughter, Alison, in a car crash in October 1995 when a poorly designed air bag opened with too much force, killing her almost instantly. In the years immediately following Alison's death, Sanders joined Claybrook in pressing Congress to require automakers to improve the design of air bags.

"We walked the halls of Congress together on numerous occasions and it was a marvel to watch her lobbying skills," Sanders said. "She would directly engage the member either in a formal meeting in their office or more typically in the hallway. She would approach them, introduce herself and immediately get to the core of the issue in a non-



Photo by Jeff Vinson

MAKING IT REAL: In March 2004, Lisa Ecker of California spoke at a Capitol Hill news conference about how her sister Amy was killed in an SUV rollover crash. Often, Public Citizen has asked people personally touched by tragedy to testify in Washington to bring home to Congress what's at stake in health and safety issues.

confrontational way. Then, depending on the member and the member's reaction she would either use political arguments or arguments to the heart, saying how necessary it was for the public well-being." The new air bag safety law was won.

Litigate That!

Sometimes, lawsuits are the only way to force regulatory agencies to do what Congress required them to do. Public Citizen is not shy about suing the government.

At times, the organization must sue to ensure that government agencies follow through when Congress enacts new safety legislation. In 2000, Public Citizen played a key role in persuading Congress to pass the TREAD Act following a rash of rollover crashes involving Ford Explorers with defective Firestone tires. The legislation included a



FROM HEALTH CARE to Congress to trade, Public Citizen has published numerous books both to alert the public about dangerous products and practices, and to build support for changes in policy.

“Public Citizen has a long and rich history of fighting for a fair and just energy policy for all, and of raising awareness about the dangers of nuclear power. Here’s to another 35 years of fantastic advocacy!”

Bonnie Raitt
Singer
Public Citizen member



Public Citizen file photo

IN CALIFORNIA, Public Citizen has worked hard in the struggle against privatization of municipal water systems. A 2002 demonstration in Stockton.

new safety standard to inform drivers with a dashboard light if their tires were not properly inflated. When the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration enacted a weak standard to enforce that law, Public Citizen sued the Bush

administration – and won.

Other notable court victories: The organization has sued to obtain government meat inspection reports showing unhealthy conditions in meat-packing facilities, get information about safety lapses at the country’s nuclear power plants, force the Department of Transportation to strengthen truck safety standards, challenge nuclear waste disposal standards at the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear dump, and force the FDA to consider public comments on patient information leaflets for prescription drugs.

Making News

The media helped launch Nader’s consumer crusade in the 1960s, and without it Public Citizen could not have flourished. Lacking the millions of dollars to spend on advertising campaigns, the organization often communicates with the public via the news media, which often gives prominent coverage to its research and policy positions.

Public Citizen’s experts appear regularly on television and radio news programs, and in national and local newspapers. This is the result of aggressive outreach to journalists throughout the country. The organization issues press releases about its reports, holds press conferences before key congressional votes and alerts reporters when



Public Citizen file photo

SEN. PAUL WELLSTONE (D-Minn.), speaks at a Public Citizen press conference in the late 1990s. When he died in a plane crash in 2002, Public Citizen lost one of its best allies on Capitol Hill.

government officials attempt to enact an anti-consumer measure under the radar screen.

In July 1998 for example, after years of intense lobbying and campaign spending by corporate interests, the Senate was preparing to vote on a bill that would have severely limited the rights of consumers to hold corporations accountable for making dangerous products. Public Citizen staffers conducted a legal analysis of the legislation,



HIGH ENERGY: Tyson Slocum, director of Public Citizen’s Critical Mass Energy Program, on CNBC. Slocum has delivered hard-hitting analysis of the Enron fiasco, Bush administration plans for energy deregulation, and oil company price-gouging.

suggested amendments to congressional allies and organized state groups to oppose it. But what might have made the final difference to the vote was a front-page story in *The New York Times* sparked by Public Citizen. The story exposed a last-minute amendment inserted by Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott to benefit a company in Mississippi, his home state. The story broke the morning of the vote, and Senator Ernest “Fritz” Hollings, the bill’s chief opponent, laid copies of the article on each senator’s desk. Lott was not able to muster the 60 votes he needed to end

a filibuster and bring the bill up for a final vote. Public Citizen won the day.

We Get Webby

The Internet has changed the way public interest groups work by adding a new dimension: the ability to disseminate information rapidly and mobilize supporters.

Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch division exploited the power of the Internet to organize thousands of protesters who converged on Seattle in 1999 to combat the WTO.

More recently, Public Citizen has launched entire interactive Web sites, featuring databases of searchable information. These include

www.WhiteHouseForSale.org, which provides information about campaign contributors to the presidential candidates; www.LobbyingInfo.org, a tool to help the media and public track the influence of special interests on Congress and the executive branch; www.WorstPills.org, which allows users to search lists of dangerous drugs and learn about the medications they take, and www.CleanUpWashington.org, to build support for Public Citizen's campaign to rein in the influence of lobbyists



Photo by Brendan Hoffman

NO NUKES: Public Citizen has a long history of highlighting the dangers of nuclear power. Here, Public Citizen joins with local activists in Richmond, Va., in 2005 to stop new nuclear reactors.

The Internet has proven an invaluable tool for informing members about breaking issues and mobilizing people for instantaneous action.

who practically buy favors from members of Congress.

Public Citizen also has launched an e-newsletter for members and is sending action alerts that urge members to contact members of Congress about upcoming legislation.

“Many of our victories on behalf of consumers have come because we can attack a problem or issue from all angles,” Claybrook said. “We can organize citizens to influence their lawmakers. We can lobby Congress. We can investigate and expose corruption through the media. We can petition federal agencies for change. We can file a lawsuit if we need to. Usually, it's a combination of these activities that results in real results for citizens.” ■




A WEB SITE YOU CAN TALK TO: In 2005, Public Citizen beefed up its Web and Internet presence to help members get actively involved in the daily struggle for progressive reforms – and do it quickly enough to make a difference.

“Public Citizen has done more for the consumer and public safety than most federal and state regulatory agencies, often forcing these agencies to do work mandated by law. I have been honored to serve on its board.”

Morris Dees
 Founder and chief trial counsel
 Southern Poverty Law Center
 Member, Public Citizen Foundation
 Board of Directors

Public Citizen's Strategic Vision for Strengthening American Community



Public Citizen believes the future strength and security of America depend upon the application of progressive values that promote community – where government works for people, not against them, to meet basic human needs, promote the health, safety and economic well-being of citizens, and foster solutions to societal problems.

Accordingly, the following principles form the basis of our advocacy and our vision for the future:

Open, Responsive, Ethical Government

Government must be transparent; be accessible and responsive to the needs of citizens and society as a whole; be fair and equitable; be free of undue influence by economic interests, with public funding of elections; and be bound by the rule of statutory and constitutional law in every endeavor.

The Universal Right to Health Care

Every citizen must have a basic right to health care, and it is the obligation of government to fulfill this right through a universal, single-payer program that ensures quality, equality and efficiency.

A Clean, Secure Energy Future

The challenges of pollution, climate change and increased global competition for limited natural resources must be met aggressively by vastly increasing fuel efficiency; phasing out the use of carbon-based fuels and nuclear power over the coming decades; researching and phasing in clean, renewable energy sources of the future; and decentralizing and diversifying energy production.

Fairness in the Marketplace

Consumers must have the means and the rights necessary to resolve grievances, and government must impose fair, uniform constraints on corporate power to ensure a level playing field for businesses and consumers alike.

Smart, Vigorous Regulation

Government must ensure that consumer products such as automobiles and prescription drugs do not pose unreasonable risks; must apply the precautionary principle to product safety and new technology; must rely on empirical data to address the most significant risks to public health, safety and the environment; and must remain independent, unbiased and free from undue influence by regulated interests.

Fair trade

The United States must enact trade policies that promote democratic principles, including the right of nations to unilaterally establish domestic policy, and protect the environment and the rights, livelihoods and traditions of citizens, both domestically and abroad.

Corporate Responsibility

Corporations have an obligation to society to respect democratic principles; conduct their business with honesty and integrity; provide living wages while treating workers with respect and dignity; work to protect the environment; and accept responsibility for their actions.



Cheers To 35 Years!

Since the earliest days of Public Citizen, we've been fighting for justice and fairness and working to protect democracy and the health, safety and pocketbooks of all Americans.

Thanks to contributions from supporters like you . . .

- We played a critical role in the passage of the Superfund law, which requires cleanup of toxic waste sites.
- We've protected the health of millions by petitioning the FDA to remove dangerous drugs from the market and exposing dangerous drugs in the *Worst Pills, Best Pills* books and newsletters.
- We forced the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to require safety training for nuclear plant workers.
- We built a broad coalition to challenge the World Trade Organization and corporate globalization.
- After 15 years of litigation we forged an historic settlement to secure the release of Nixon's White House tapes.
- And we lobbied successfully for campaign finance reform, helping to pass the McCain-Feingold bill.

But none of these victories would have been possible without the generous support of people like you. By never taking a single penny from business or government, we can maintain our fierce independence in our fight for the public interest.

You can join our celebration of 35 years of accomplishments by underwriting Public Citizen's next victories with a 35th Anniversary gift of \$35, \$350 or even \$3,500. Your contribution will keep us in front of Congress, the White House and in courtrooms across the country, representing you and holding corporations and the government accountable.

To make a special contribution to celebrate 35 years of fighting the good fight, please visit www.citizen.org/35anniversary on the Web or fill out the contribution slip included in this magazine.



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