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Public Justice Receives Unprecedented Gift to Fund Richard Zitrin Anti-Secrecy Attorney

“Transformative” gift will greatly enhance legal advocacy organization’s efforts to stop litigation secrecy that prevents the public from knowing about evidence of corporate harm and misconduct

The Arthur and Charlotte Zitrin Foundation of San Francisco has made a gift of \$2.4 million to Public Justice to endow the Richard Zitrin Anti-Secrecy Attorney. This gift, the largest ever in Public Justice’s 39-year history, will provide for an advocate charged with preventing the scourge of courthouse secrecy caused by secret settlements and overbroad court protective orders that hide information from the public. This advocate will continue [Public Justice’s longstanding efforts](#) to break the barrier of secrecy in individual cases, and deepen Public Justice’s commitment to attack secrecy through legislative and other means. A priority will be fighting secrets about dangerous, defective, and fraudulent products.

“We must break the barriers that prevent public awareness about dangers to the public health and safety. When corporations put profits before safety and trial courts issue overbroad secrecy orders in the interests of ‘efficiency,’ the public becomes the victim. And the damage to the public falls disproportionately on the poor and communities of color,” said Richard Zitrin, the Foundation’s president. Zitrin, who describes the fight against litigation secrecy as his “life’s work” over the last twenty years, noted that “Public Justice, a longtime ally, has been *the* leading organization in this fight. Choosing to place this attorney at Public Justice was a no-brainer.”

Zitrin, who describes himself as a “trial lawyer at his core,” is Lecturer Emeritus at the University of California, Hastings, and is considered the leading expert on legal ethics in California. His foundation honors his parents, both social justice advocates: his father Arthur an acclaimed physician and bioethicist, and his mother Charlotte Marker a pioneer in both pediatric medicine and psychiatry, and one of the world’s foremost experts in treating phobias.

Public Justice pursues high impact lawsuits to combat social and economic injustice, protect the Earth’s sustainability, and challenge predatory corporate conduct and government abuses. Public Justice has long been a national leader in intervening in litigation to unseal information about deadly automobile parts, dangerous pharmaceuticals, and more. Court secrecy is among the several fundamental and widespread barriers to Americans’ day in court that Public Justice’s [Access to Justice](#) program works to tear down.

“This generous gift will be transformative for Public Justice as an organization, and it represents an enormous step forward for the movement to stop corporations from using secrecy to get away with seriously harming huge groups of people in pursuit of profit,” said Public Justice Executive Director Paul Bland.

“We will start using Richard Zitrin’s donation immediately to stop courts from needlessly sealing documents about illegal and dangerous schemes and cover-ups. The efforts this gift makes possible will

ultimately serve as a deterrent to the worst business misconduct, and make America a safer, healthier, and fairer place for generations.”