



PUBLIC JUSTICE

IMPACT. CHANGE.

EVALUATING CASES NOMINATED FOR THE TRIAL LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Each year, Public Justice is proud to present its Trial Lawyer of the Year Award to the trial attorney or legal team who made the greatest contribution to the public interest within the past year by trying or settling a socially significant case.

The cases won or settled by finalists cover a broad range of public interest work, including but not limited to civil rights, consumer protection, workers' rights, human rights, environmental preservation, and corporate and governmental accountability.

APPLYING THE PUBLIC JUSTICE AWARD CRITERIA

Members of the Public Justice Foundation's Impact Litigation and Legal Strategy Committee will evaluate each nominated case using the criteria set forth below.

[Please note that to be considered for the 2026 Trial Lawyer of the Year Award, the final settlement/judgment/verdict in the case needs to have been entered between January 1, 2025 and January 1, 2026. The deadline for submitting nominations is February 27, 2026.]

- 1. The dedication, tenacity, and skill of the trial lawyer(s) involved.** This includes the length of the case, the strategic and tactical skill involved, the obstacles and pitfalls overcome, the difficulty of the procedural hurdles, and trial strategy.
- 2. The public interest significance of the case.** This includes the public interest issues that were litigated, the novelty of the issues involved, the importance of the case, whether the case made "new law," and whether it affected others similarly situated.
- 3. The harmfulness of the defendant's conduct.** This includes the enormity of the wrong committed by the defendant and the degree of suffering or victimization of the plaintiffs.
- 4. The result.** This includes the specific relief obtained and whether it is final, including the amount of damages and/or the nature and extent of injunctive relief obtained, any other results obtained, the current status of the case, and whether an appeal was taken and won.
- 5. The extent to which the case advances any of the goals set forth in our vision statement:**
 - combat social and economic injustice,
 - protect the Earth's sustainability,
 - challenge predatory corporate conduct and government abuses.