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About assignment of benefits abuse

From an insurance defense attorney's perspective, handling literally hundreds of property cases each year, I can tell you that true reforms are needed to control the growing avalanche of litigation fueled by one-way attorneys' fees and assignment of benefits (AOB) abuses.

I am supporting common sense reforms, reforms that protect homeowners' rights while keeping unscrupulous contractors and plaintiffs attorneys from milking the system.

There are some good bills moving in the legislature that don't reward contractors waiting 30 or 60 days to make an AOB claim for a lot of unnecessary work performed without the knowledge or consent of the insurance company.

Bills that protect the consumer from getting involved in litigation they may know nothing about because they signed over their insurance policy rights to a contractor in a time of desperation.

Bills that make contractors and their attorneys accountable for their actions compared to now, where attorneys' fees are almost never awarded to an insurance company, even when they win the case.

The numbers speak for themselves. According to the Florida Department of Financial Services, litigation against property insurance companies in Florida has nearly tripled to 69,300 in the past five years, resulting in double-digit home insurance rate increases for years to come.

Something must be done to control a small number of law firms and contractors who are enriching themselves at the expense of honest homeowners.

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