



Engle v. Liggett Group, Inc., 945 So.2d 1246 (Fla. 2006)

Topics Covered: Anti-tobacco

Outcome: Very Unfavorable

Issue

The issue in this case was whether tobacco companies could be held liable to cigarette smokers through class action litigation.

AMA Interest

The AMA, in keeping with its objective of protecting public health, supports a smoke-free America.

Case Summary

Pursuant to a jury verdict, the trial court in 2000 awarded a class of smokers \$145 billion against the countries' major tobacco companies. The claim was based on breach of warranty and various torts. However, after having previously approved class certification, the Florida Court of Appeal decertified the class.

The case was appealed to the Florida Supreme Court, which remanded to the trial court, directing decertification of the class without prejudice to the class members' filing individual claims within one year. The Florida Supreme Court approved the Court of Appeal's reversal of the \$145 billion dollar punitive damages award, but ordered reinstatement of compensatory damage awards to two individual plaintiffs.

AMA Involvement

The AMA, along with several other public health organizations, filed an *amicus* brief to urge recertification of the plaintiff class.

Florida Supreme Court brief