Philadelphia civil courts have come under fire for attracting and favoring plaintiffs from outside the city at the expense of its consumers and businesses. A new study, entitled " Are Plaintiffs Drawn to Philadelphia's Civil Courts? An Empirical Examination ," issued by the International Center for Law & Economics and authored by Professor of Law and Economics at George Mason University School of Law, Joshua D. Wright , finds evidence that Philadelphia civil courts are indeed marked by structural biases that attract plaintiffs with little or no connection to the city, leading to disproportionate litigation and verdicts relative to other courts.

Using data from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, Professor Wright compares filing trends and case outcomes in Philadelphia to the rest of Pennsylvania and other representative state courts. As explained in greater depth in the paper, Philadelphia courts, when measured against non-Philadelphia Pennsylvania state courts and federal district courts, exhibit marked and significant dissimilarities supporting an inference that something intrinsically unusual is occurring in Philadelphia. Philadelphia courts host an especially large number of cases, Philadelphia courts have a larger docket than expected, Philadelphia plaintiffs are less likely to settle than other non-Philadelphia Pennsylvania plaintiffs, and Philadelphia plaintiffs are disproportionately likely to prefer jury trials. These findings are consistent with a conclusion that Philadelphia courts demonstrate a marked and meaningful preference for plaintiffs.

Here is the full report. Please contact us if you are interested in speaking with Professor Wright about the report or would like a comment on the report or the pending legislation.