

The Anti-SLAPP Toolkit:

Three Ways to Fight Back Against SLAPP Suits

1. **RAISE AWARENESS:** Let's face it, you've probably never heard of a SLAPP suit. And that's just the way corporate bullies like it. The way they see it, if no one knows about the tactic they can easily disguise their SLAPP as a run-of-the-mill civil lawsuit - when in fact it's designed to intimidate and silence dissent.

Any fight back against SLAPPs therefore needs to start with raising awareness. There are a number of ways you can help do this - here are just a few:

- ***Talk to friends and family:*** tell them what you've learned and what you think about it. Ask if they've ever experienced anything like this and what their opinion is. Personal conversations are one of the best way to change people's minds about an issue. If you hear any personal SLAPP stories - let us know on Facebook!
- ***Organise speaker events/panels:*** think about communities you are a part of who may be interested in learning more about SLAPPs. These could be your school, your neighborhood, a discussion group, your place of worship, conferences, etc. Local, national, and international organizations that work on the issue could be willing to send guest speakers, or put you in touch with other leading voices in the broader anti-SLAPP movement.
- ***Start a student group:*** if you're a law student you're better placed than anyone to push back against the normalisation of legal intimidation tactics and stigmatise the use of SLAPPs. With a student group you can invite relevant speakers to your school, raise awareness of these tactics, and expose those law firms who make use of them.

2. **RAISE MONEY:** SLAPPs shut down criticism by draining resources and intimidating critics with the prospect of eye-wateringly high legal fees. Even groups resilient enough to defend themselves are forced to divert their resources and attention away from their real mission: advocacy. Mike Masnick, the founder of TechDirt, described in a speech to the Personal Democracy Forum how his blog had to cut a third of its stories after it was SLAPPED in January 2017.

The best way to support a SLAPP victim is therefore to help them survive the SLAPP suit and continue their legitimate advocacy work with financial support. This signals to SLAPP bullies that their tactics will backfire: far from weakening their target, the lawsuit will make them even stronger than before. See below for some examples of where you can donate money.

3. **RAISE YOUR VOICE:** The SLAPP phenomenon isn't just a legal matter – it's a political one as well. The Public Participation Project has been working over the last few years to lobby for anti-SLAPP laws on both the state and federal level. You can help this effort by signing its open letter to House

Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte. On a state level, anti-SLAPP laws are currently being considered in Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio. If you live in one of these states (or have friends who do) contact your local State representative or senator and ask them for their support.

Raising your voice can help beat individual SLAPPs too. In particular:

- ***Tweet, blog, and share!*** Whenever you see an example of a SLAPP – call it out. Whether it’s a coal CEO suing John Oliver for criticising his unsafe mining practices, or Harvey Weinstein responding to his victims with bogus legal threats, don’t let anybody get away with it. Write about it, tweet about it, and let people know how unacceptable you think it is.
- ***Show defiance:*** SLAPPs are designed to silence speech, so the best way to ensure the tactic backfires and deters others is for that speech to be made even stronger in response. The company that built the Dakota Access Pipeline, ETP, is suing Greenpeace for speaking out in solidarity with the Standing Rock protesters, led by indigenous activists. Help us show ETP that this speech will not be silenced by sharing the true stories of what happened (see “Resources” below).
- ***Publicise the dismissal of SLAPPs:*** SLAPP-happy corporations hope you won’t notice how their SLAPPs end. Given that these lawsuits are by their very nature baseless, the end will generally be marked with a dismissal by the judge that exposes the lawsuit as a SLAPP. So *when* they lose, it’s important to celebrate and amplify these victories, and to show SLAPP-happy corporations everywhere that they’re onto a losing gamble.

RESOURCES

- You can find more details of the SLAPPs filed against Greenpeace by Resolute Forest Products [here](#), while more on the ETP SLAPP can be found [here](#).
- Learn about the #StopETP movement [here](#), and read stories from Indigenous Rising Media of the Indigenous Environmental Network [here](#).
- In terms of raising money, you can donate to Greenpeace USA [here](#); BankTrack (our co-defendants in the ETP case) [here](#); and Stand.Earth (our co-defendants in the Resolute case) [here](#). More generally, there are a number of defence funds that have been set up to support different categories of public watchdogs: for scientists, there is the [Climate Science Legal Defense Fund](#), for example, while for whistleblowers and journalists there is the [Press Freedom Defense Fund](#).
- Mike Masnick’s speech to the Personal Democracy Forum on his personal experiences being SLAPPED, and the chilling impact it had on himself and on his blog, can be found [here](#).
- The website of the Public Participation Project can be found [here](#), while the open letter to Bob Goodlatte can be found [here](#).
- Read more about the John Oliver SLAPP [here](#) (or watch the brilliant video that provoked the SLAPP [here](#)) while details of Harvey Weinstein’s legal threat can be found [here](#) (while [this story](#) shows how SLAPPs prevented the Weinstein scandal coming to light earlier)