

A plaintiff may want to have her fellow, average American hear her story in a court of law and make a decision based on emotion. In the plaintiff's mind, when emotion is involved with the decision making of an injury case, such as the amount of pain and suffering or the amount of money awarded, then she is looking at a smooth and painless path to acquiring what she thinks she deserves. However, I believe this route is too risky for a plaintiff to pursue and even riskier for a defendant. While an individual has the right to request a trial by jury in a legal proceeding, I do not believe that this right should be expanded due to the consequences associated. Rather, I suggest that in an injury case, the individual should decide on a bench trial.

While there are obvious disadvantages to a jury trial, such as lengthier trials, the greatest risk is that which many believe is their greatest benefit. This risk is human emotion. Although a plaintiff may think that the jury's raw reaction towards their situation would swing a favorable decision or a valuable sum of money, the inconsistency of the human mind may lead to an inverse conclusion and leave the plaintiff in a worse position than if a decision was made by a judge alone. These unpredictable outcomes can also affect the defendant. If the presentation of evidence against the defendant sways the jury, then this can cause them to make an erroneous decision based solely on their emotions. This could lead to a punishment that is too harsh for the action or no punishment at all. We also have to keep in mind that the average juror is not chopping at the bit to be at a trial, so their desire to get out of the courtroom, especially in a slower-moving case, could also lead to awry or rushed decisions.

Although many people assume that in injury cases, human emotion from a jury will drive their chance of success, the fact of the matter is that human emotion cannot be controlled, especially not in a high stress environment, such as a courtroom. Because of this reality, I believe

that increasing the right to a jury trial would not lead to a more favorable outcome for any party involved, but rather to a more chaotic and perhaps unresolved result.

As a rising 1L at Emory University School of Law, I look forward to deepening my knowledge of the law. However, arriving at this level of excitement did not come without obstacles. As a first-generation law student, I have not known much about the day to day life of an attorney and what it really means to love the law. This has been difficult since I have been unsure about what to expect in law school. Even though I have not had family members in my position, I have met an attorney to help me with this transition. Although it has come with unfortunate circumstances of my uncle's murder last year, our attorney and my uncle's lifelong friend, has not only been there for my family and I, but has also taught me what the life of a lawyer entails. But the pressure of law school preparation came at a time of emotional strain due to my uncle's sudden death, and the stress did stray me from my dream of attending law school and becoming an attorney. However, it did not keep me away for long. After spending time with this new mentor of mine this past year, I have seen just how much one can be dedicated to justice. With his help, I was reassured that this *is* the career for me.

After my uncle's death, I was not in the most stable mental state, but remembering that he had always wanted me to pursue my dream of becoming a lawyer has pushed me even harder to acquire the best possible legal education that I can. I believe that my perseverance and ability to find the good out of a dire situation has proved my dedication to my future career. If chosen for this award, I would be one step closer to not only being able to pay for an invaluable education at a school that I could have only dreamed about attending, but also being able to make my uncle proud of the lawyer I will become.