

As children we are taught how the founding fathers of this great nation fought, bled, and died for our rights and freedoms. Yet today, in a modern world, it feels like we still must fight against injustice and for our very freedoms and, in my opinion, freedom of speech and expression is particularly threatened. As a native of Philadelphia, the birthplace of our American freedoms, I find that deeply troubling.

As a blogger, I have been aware of SLAPP suits for years. This year, I became embroiled in one, in Chester County, where I live. The suit is over the potential development of an old factory site in Malvern, East Whiteland Township known as Bishop Tube. I am a resident of East Whiteland Township.

I had written about the Bishop Tube site on my blog. I am not the only one who has ever written about it or ever has had questions about it. The site has also been written about in newspaper articles off and on for many years. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (“PA DEP”), there is TCE contamination on this site. ([Reference the PA DEP website’s Bishop Tube page](#)).

I am a breast cancer survivor who underwent breast cancer treatment and, as a survivor, a site like this should be a concern in my opinion. As a resident I should also be able to express my opinions and/or ask questions.

SLAPP suits are an invasive, fearsome kind of thing. Finding oneself in the middle of something like this feels like you are being bullied and harassed. It can also be unbearably costly. Frequently the suit bringer hopes this is what will defeat you. Mostly, it makes you wonder about the good and honor of human kind.

Caring about where you live is not wrong, it is democracy in action. When people take an interest in where they live, it is a powerful force. It is rarely easy for the residents involved, and I think it does take great courage. The residents in East Whiteland deserve better.

Thank you

Carla Zambelli

[www.chestercountyrablings.com](http://www.chestercountyrablings.com)