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I am just a bill

A LOOK AT HOW YOUR IDEAS CAN BECOME LAW, AND THE PROPOSALS FOR NEW LAWS CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED FOR SUPPORT BY CAOC

Who remembers the 1976 Schoolhouse Rock tune “I am just a bill,” or for Simpson’s fans, the episode “The Day the Violence Died,” in which Krusty the Clown presents “I’m an Amendment to Be,” depicting a constitutional amendment’s attempt to ban flag burning? Well, not much has really changed. The process of legislation being introduced, passed and enacted (or defeated) pretty much remains the same year after year.

So what does it take to get new laws enacted and how is it done? There are the official deadlines you will find on the California legislative website (<https://www.assembly.ca.gov/legislative-deadlines>), which details the bill introduction date, committee deadlines and the beginning and the end of the legislative session, including when the governor must sign or veto legislation that reaches his desk.

But that doesn’t tell the real story. In order to be successful (and Consumer Attorneys of California successfully passed eight sponsored bills last year), specific and detailed action, planning and strategy is required.

So how does a bill really become a law? It starts with an idea from a trial lawyer like you. All lawyers are encouraged to submit legislative proposals throughout the year at CAOC’s easy-to-use legislative submission link (<https://forms.gle/dc5pEZSHso5uCAQC7>). We will not consider proposals that haven’t been officially submitted, so please use the link for your ideas.

In determining what legislative proposals we will sponsor, CAOC looks at a variety of factors, including:

- The proposal’s impact on consumer or worker legal rights
- Whether or not the proposal will assist our members’ practices
- How well the issue defines CAOC
- The likelihood of success
- Whether or not the issue gives us educational and outreach opportunities with legislators, the press, the public, and our coalition partners

In November, all legislative submissions are summarized and presented to the CAOC board and each lawyer is asked to present their ideas at the annual CAOC convention meeting. After vote tabulating and discussion with our executive committee, proposals are finalized for the following year.

Then the fun begins! As your attorney advocates, we assist in drafting the legislation, soliciting coalition support, discussing political strategy with our team, finding an appropriate legislative author, lobbying legislators and beginning the lengthy process of taking an idea from concept to reality.

After your votes last year, CAOC is sponsoring 2020 legislation suggested by many of our members to increase the state’s antiquated auto insurance minimums, currently set at 15/30/5. And we are working on a number of other high-profile, yet-to-be-announced proposals for 2020 and 2021.



While we are still in the process of finalizing other tort and insurance proposals, there are a number of civil procedure issues that the board is reviewing and prioritizing for possible legislative enactment, including addressing court reporters who are withholding transcripts in violation of the “SoCalStip”; fixing the increasing practice of health insurers seeking reimbursement from uninsured motorist benefits; addressing the practice of Los Angeles courts that have stopped implementing the fast track rules; examining legislation to enact a “first look at medical records”; addressing high court reporter costs; allowing video recording of defense medical exams; amending Code of Civil Procedure section 664.5 so that adjuster-only mediation settlements are enforceable; statutorily limiting objections during depositions to “form of question,” “privacy,” and “privilege”; clarifying location of PMK depositions; adding requests for information about self-insured retentions to Form Interrogatory 4.1; addressing costs not covered by current law under Code of Civil Procedure section 1033.5; and improving voir dire. All of these ideas were proposed by attorney members like you.

We would love your thoughts on all of these proposals. Meanwhile, I hope you will save the date for CAOC’s Justice Day on Tuesday, April 28 in Sacramento. As always, thank you for your support of our legislative team. We are working to protect the rights of your clients and the health of your practice.

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