



Update from Sacramento
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CAOC opposes new proposal to limit non-economic damages against public entities

ALSO, A REVIEW OF OUR SUCCESS STORIES IN THE PRIMARY ELECTION

When CAOC-led efforts stopped a contingency fee initiative from being placed on the November 2024 ballot, we finally thought consumer legal rights were safe (for now!) Although the threat still exists for the 2026 ballot, we have clear and present dangers of serious tort reform this year in California.

Two weeks ago, we found out that the city attorney of Los Angeles was sponsoring a proposal to limit all non-economic damages in any case against a public entity to three times actual damages or \$1 million, whichever is less. And there were legislators willing to take this proposal, as we had reports that the city attorney has mentioned that Los Angeles will declare bankruptcy if “excessive lawsuits” are not addressed. One legislator told us that there was a public entity payout in his district that killed a project for a low-income-area park.

CAOC’s advocacy team (Nancy Drabble, Nancy Peaverini, Lea-Ann Tratten, Jacquie Serna and Saveena Takhar) went into 24/7 crisis-and-survival mode to stop this bill from being introduced. All members of legislative leadership were contacted. We spoke to every single Democrat or their top staff from the Los Angeles area, as well as the Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committee members. With help from CAOC members, we compiled a compelling document of real-life examples of cases where victims’ justice in the civil courts would have been totally gutted.

CAOC will remain vigilant as rumors are that the city attorney remains committed to this terrible proposal.

Some of the other “oppose” legislation this year so far include:

- AB 1897 (Flora), which creates a “loser

pays” attorney fee law in all California cases.

- SB 1470 (Glazer), which limits homeowner’s rights in construction defect litigation.
- AB 2049 (Pacheco), which is a defense counsel bill to change summary judgement rules.
- SB 1296 (Niello), sponsored by Liberty Mutual and American Property Casualty Insurance Association, which overturns longstanding judicial interpretation law by prohibiting the use of secondary sources in insurance cases.
- AB 2743 (Pacheco), which limits insurance requirements on peer-to-peer car sharing entities such as Turo.
- SB 1141 (Niello), which requires mandatory mediation of cases under \$150,000.
- AB 2972 (Mathis), which changes employment law related to overtime.
- SB 1479 (Alvarado-Gil) and AB 2635 (Irwin), which immunize “agritourism” businesses such as pumpkin patches or u-pic farms from civil liability.
- AB 1928 (Sanchez), which overturns the *Dynamex* case related to independent contractors.
- SB 1149 (Niello), which immunizes the state for specific bridge collapses.

CAOC is here for you, and we thank you for your support of our legislative team. Please remember to register for this year’s Justice Day May 13-14 in Sacramento, when we will advocate for the civil justice system and your clients at the Capitol.

In good news for civil justice issues in Sacramento, several CAOC-endorsed candidates have advanced to November for election to the state Senate and Assembly. Most of our targeted seats are in districts with no incumbent. In an additional benefit to CAOC’s legislative

agenda, many of the candidates are attorneys.

Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes, an attorney and author of important CAOC legislation, will be elected to a new majority-Democrat Senate district in the Inland Empire. CAOC board member Kipp Mueller will face former Assemblymember Suzette Valladares in a Democrat-leaning Senate district covering parts of northern Los Angeles County and northern San Bernardino County. While in the Assembly, Valladares did not support CAOC issues. Mueller will be a civil justice champion in the Senate.

With the support of CAOC, progressive Sasha Renee Perez defeated a self-funded millionaire moderate Democrat candidate in a district covering parts of the San Gabriel Valley, San Fernando Valley and Inland Empire. Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes moves on to November in a majority-Democrat Riverside-region district, to continue the good work of outgoing CAOC ally Senator Richard Roth. In San Diego, Assemblymember Akilah Weber will be replacing Senator Toni Atkins after the November election.

In the Los Angeles County area, six CAOC-endorsed candidates advance to November to fill open Assembly districts currently represented by CAOC-friendly legislators. Attorney John Harabedian will replace Assemblymember Chris Holden in the Pasadena area; attorney Nick Schultz will replace Assemblymember Laura Friedman in a San Fernando Valley district; Jessica Caloza, a former deputy to Attorney General Rob Bonta, will be elected in a central Los Angeles district.

Mark Gonzales will replace his current boss, Assemblymember Miguel

Santiago, in another central L.A. district. In an east San Fernando Valley district, Celeste Rodriguez will replace her friend, Assemblymember Luz Rivas. Jose Solache will replace Assemblymember Anthony Rendon in a southeast L.A. County district.

A few hot races will continue to be watched in Los Angeles County for the November general election. In Senate District 35, departing Senator Steve Bradford endorsed Michelle Chambers

to take his seat; CAOC also endorsed Chambers. She will face fellow Democrat Laura Richardson in the general election. Two Assembly districts will have runoffs between Democrats with stark ideological differences. In Assembly District 50, departing Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes's endorsed candidate, Robert Garcia, will face corporate Democrat Adam Perez. Perez's financial contributions read like the "who's who" of Merchants of Death: Phillip Morris, Big

Oil, Alcohol and Big Insurance. In Assembly District 57, the seat currently held by Reggie Jones Sawyer, CAOC's endorsed candidate Sade Elhawary will face the corporate-backed candidate Efrin Martinez in November.

Electing good candidates is only part of the process. The next step involves *you* – we need to build on these relationships in each district.

