



# CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

*Seeking Justice for All*

## Seven CAOC-backed bills on Gov. Brown's desk

Bills regarding forced arbitration, doctor shopping await signature

**SACRAMENTO (Aug. 31, 2016)** – Seven bills sponsored or supported by Consumer Attorneys of California have been sent to Gov. Jerry Brown as the California Legislature wraps up its 2015-16 session today.

“We’re proud of what we’ve done to protect California consumers this session,” said CAOC president Elise R. Sanguinetti. “Not only has our legislation been approved, but once again this year we have defeated all ‘tort reform’ attempts to strip consumers of their rights.”

Three of the bills deal with the practice of corporations forcing consumers to take disputes to a secret arbitration process rather than the courts:

- [SB 1241](#) by Sen. Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont) would ensure that Californians do not have to travel outside the state to litigate or arbitrate an employment dispute. It also requires that a hearing in these cases follow California’s employee protection laws, not the laws of other states that often have weaker provisions.
- [SB 1078](#) by Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) addresses injustice and bias by private arbitration firms that handle forced arbitrations. Such firms often work with defendant companies on a regular basis without disclosing any conflict of interest. SB 1078 strengthens current marketing limitations and disclosure requirements as well as rules relating to the ability of arbitrators to enter into future arrangements with corporate defendants.
- [SB 1065](#), authored by Sen. Bill Monning (D-Carmel) and co-sponsored by CAOC, the Congress of California Seniors and California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, offers protection in elder abuse cases against nursing homes. The bill will speed the appeal process for dying seniors when a judge denies forced arbitration in cases filed under the Elder and Dependent Adult Civil Protection Act.

Here are the other bills sponsored or supported by CAOC that await action by the governor:

[SB 482](#) by Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) is a major step toward reducing dangerous “doctor shopping” in California and the damage caused by the prescription opioid abuse epidemic. The measure will require that physicians check the state’s existing CURES pharmaceutical database before prescribing potentially-addictive narcotics for the first time. Researchers at Johns Hopkins and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have called for mandatory use of prescription databases, and some two dozen states have already enacted similar measures. SB 482 is co-sponsored by CAOC and the California Narcotic Officers Association.

[AB 2427](#) by Assembly Member Ed Chau (D-Arcadia), co-sponsored by CAOC and the California Defense Counsel, will allow legal heirs and representatives to obtain coroner’s photos without seeking a

court order. It also requires materials, reports and writings of experts demanded to be produced in deposition notices to be produced not less than three business days prior to the expert's deposition.

[AB 2748](#) by Assembly Member Mike Gatto (D-Glendale) was spawned by troubles after the catastrophic Aliso Canyon natural gas leak and the Exide Technologies lead contamination disaster in the City of Vernon. Amidst such environmental disasters, homeowners face having their legal rights undercut in exchange for a polluter providing emergency housing. The bill provides protections in the release of claims, extends for one additional year the current statute of limitations for civil actions based on exposure to a hazardous material or toxic substance, and provides prevailing plaintiff attorney's fees.

[SB 247](#) by Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) places new operating and equipment requirements on charter buses, including emergency light fixtures and mandatory safety instruction for passengers at the start of the trip so they're aware of the locations and operation of emergency exits and the use of seat belts.

One other bill co-sponsored by CAOC was [signed by Gov. Brown earlier this month: AB 2159](#) by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego), ensuring that undocumented Californians will be treated fairly by prohibiting consideration of an injured person's immigration status in personal injury and wrongful death suits.

*Consumer Attorneys of California is a professional organization of plaintiffs' attorneys representing consumers seeking accountability against wrongdoers in cases involving personal injury, product liability, environmental degradation and other causes.*

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