



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

CAOC-backed bill protects charter bus passengers

SB 247 passes Assembly Transportation Committee

SACRAMENTO (June 13, 2016) – Life-saving safety measures to protect charter bus passengers in California are closer to reality after the Assembly Transportation Committee today approved a bill supported by Consumer Attorneys of California. The bill passed 13-0 with bipartisan support.

[SB 247](#) by Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) was proposed in the wake of a fiery crash on Interstate 5 near Orland in April 2014 between a FedEx truck and a charter bus carrying Los Angeles-area high school students on their way to visit Humboldt State University. Eight bus passengers were killed and 37 others were injured. The *Los Angeles Times* [reported](#) the National Transportation Safety Board found that “outmoded flammability requirements for bus interiors, the lack of pre-trip safety briefings for motor coach passengers and inadequate, poorly-marked emergency exits led to unnecessary deaths and injuries.” More than half the students on the bus reported not knowing which windows were emergency exits.

SB 247 requires new charter buses to meet the safety requirements recommended by the NTSB, which would include having a second exit door, burn-resistant materials and a “black box” event data recorder to allow for accurate analysis of crashes. Charter bus drivers will also be required to instruct passengers of the locations and operations of emergency exits and the use of seat belts at the start of the trip. The changes would go into effect July 1, 2017.

“This bill has a lot of common-sense, low-cost measures,” said CAOC member Geoff Wells in testimony before the committee. “Some of these recommendations, like giving instructions as to where the exits are, cost nothing.”

“The NTSB has repeatedly warned the California Department of Transportation about the need to improve motor coach safety standards, but Caltrans has refused to act,” CAOC president Elise Sanguinetti said. “It’s going to take legislation to bring about change. Other types of vehicles that carry large numbers of passengers, such as airplanes, trains and limousines, are required to meet far more stringent safety standards than buses.”

SB 247 was approved by the California Senate in January on a vote of 26-4. It will next be heard by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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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