



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Newsom enacts CAOC-backed courts emergency order

Governor's action will help ensure justice during COVID-19 crisis

SACRAMENTO (March 27, 2020) – Responding to a request by Consumer Attorneys of California, Gov. Gavin Newsom has enacted an emergency order that will allow the state's civil justice system to continue conducting business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Newsom directly suspended the statute that had been a barrier to attorneys trying to use remote video depositions and electronic service of process as a workaround during the health crisis, which has largely shuttered courthouses up and down the state and put the justice system in a tailspin.

In addition, the governor gave Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye and the California Judicial Council authority to take necessary steps to ensure legal rights aren't undercut, including uniformly extending court deadlines on statute of limitations and other matters.

“Truly this was an access to justice issue,” said CAOC President Micha Star Liberty. “If we cannot protect the status of legal rights, if we cannot serve documents by email or take depositions remotely, a key component of our democracy – the civil justice system – would come grinding to a halt.”

Consumer Attorneys of California CEO and Chief Lobbyist Nancy Drabble and her advocacy team pushed for the emergency declaration in talks over recent weeks with the governor's office, the Judicial Council and legislative leadership. They were joined in the effort by the California Defense Counsel.

“Nancy and her team went to the mat on this,” Liberty said. “Every attorney in the state who files a case, and that's all of us, owes them a debt of gratitude.”

Newsom's order, issued Friday evening, lets attorneys utilize electronic service of process and remote depositions in every case, circumventing a law had previously required that parties be deposed in person. Use of that technology will help limit public exposure to COVID-19

In addition, the governor gave Cantil-Sakauye and the Judicial Council, the top administrative body for California's courts, discretion to make any modifications to legal practice and procedure it deems necessary in order to continue conducting business. That is expected to include extending filing deadlines during the health crisis and remote access hearings.

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.

**For more information:
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