



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

U.S. Supreme Court decisions earn praise, criticism CAOC applauds marriage equality, decries anti-consumer rulings

SACRAMENTO (June 26, 2013) – The United States Supreme Court’s term came to an end today with welcome news about marriage equality. But Consumer Attorneys of California President Brian Kabateck mixed his enthusiasm for today’s decisions with harsh criticism of a series of anti-consumer rulings the court has made this term.

“These have been the best of times and the worst of times at the Supreme Court,” Kabateck said.

Regarding today’s historic marriage equality rulings, Kabateck said, “CAOC has always stood for the equal rights of all Californians, and so we applaud the court for its decisions to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act and the challenge to the Ninth Circuit’s ruling on Proposition 8. We also applaud the swift actions taken by Gov. Jerry Brown and Attorney General Kamala Harris to make clear that county officials must issue marriage licenses to all Californians who apply for one, regardless of their sexual orientation, as soon as the Ninth Circuit confirms the stay on its order is lifted.”

Kabateck pointed out the important role the civil justice system continues to play in advancing civil rights. It was a civil suit that led the California Supreme Court to rule that same-sex couples have the same right to be married as opposite-sex couples, and it was a civil suit that led an appellate court to find that the attempt to amend the state constitution to prohibit same-sex marriage was unconstitutional. “The civil justice system has historically played the crucial role in ensuring members of minority groups have equal rights,” Kabateck said.

But Kabateck pointed out the same Supreme Court that upheld same-sex marriage rights had issued a host of rulings during the term that directly contradict CAOC’s fundamental beliefs in civil rights and civil justice, including several that shackle consumers’ rights to hold corporate wrongdoers accountable for their actions.

“Striking down portions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, upholding attenuated federal preemption of litigation involving dangerous drugs, and enforcing arbitration agreements where no claimant can afford to arbitrate alone a small dispute with a corporation is not what we expect from our American judicial leaders,” Kabateck said. “These are the most anti-consumer and anti-individual-rights decisions of our generation. CAOC will continue to work with our state and national partner advocacy groups and continue to fight to protect all Californians and all Americans from corporate abuse.”

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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