



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Assembly OKs bill holding Internet retailers like Amazon to same liability standard as the corner store AB 3262 levels playing field between online sellers and traditional stores

SACRAMENTO (June 11, 2020) – The California Assembly approved legislation today that holds online marketplaces like Amazon to the same legal standard as the corner store when they sell dangerous products that injure or kill.

Assembly Bill 3262 by Asm. Mark Stone (D-Monterey Bay), which prevailed on a 54-to-14 bipartisan vote, is sponsored by Consumer Attorneys of California, California Teamsters Public Affairs Council and United Food and Commercial Workers Union Western States Council.

The bill was spawned because online retailers claim that California's longstanding consumer protection law holding businesses in the supply chain responsible when products cause harm does not apply to e-commerce.

With online purchases topping 15% of total sales even before the COVID-19 pandemic pushed nearly all retail onto the web in recent months, the rejection of that strict product liability law leaves a ballooning number of consumers devoid of any remedy if they are injured by a dangerous product sold online. In addition, it gives online retailers an unfair competitive advantage over traditional storefront retailers.

While the product liability law has for years pushed traditional brick-and-mortar stores to ensure the safety of the products they put on shelves, online sales are like the Wild West, with many untested and dangerous products sold from other countries with lax safety protocols. At least 40% of Amazon's third-party suppliers that sell more than \$1 million annually are based in China. In some cases the dangerous products are toys, such as a hoverboard that burst into flames.

“With COVID-19 dramatically shifting shopping onto the web, e-commerce retailers more than ever need to be held to the same standards as mom-and-pop stores,” said CAOC President Micha Star Liberty. “This measure will prevent injuries and save lives. It will also level the playing field for all retailers, whether online or on Main Street.”

AB 3262 now goes to the state Senate for consideration.

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:

J.G. Preston, CAOC Press Secretary, 916-600-9692, jgpreston@caoc.org
Eric Bailey, CAOC Communications Director, 916-201-4849, ebailey@caoc.org