



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Senate approves CAOC-sponsored bill to ease burden on courts, reduce litigation costs and hasten justice SB 1012 expands civil cases qualifying for expedited jury trials

SACRAMENTO (May 7, 2018) – The California State Senate today approved a bill sponsored by Consumer Attorneys of California that would allow more civil cases to qualify for California’s expedited jury trials, a streamlined system of justice that saves time and taxpayer dollars.

SB 1012, authored by Sen. Bob Hertzberg (D-Los Angeles), would reduce the burden on California courts and cut litigation costs for all parties in a lawsuit by boosting the number of cases that qualify as expedited jury trials.

Under current law, expedited jury trials are required (with some exceptions) for “limited” civil cases seeking \$25,000 or less. SB 1012 would expand that threshold to cases up to \$50,000. Accounting for inflation, that’s approximately the value of \$25,000 in 1986, the last time California changed the limit.

SB 1012 is in response to a report last year by the Commission on the Future of California’s Court System that found that litigation costs are outpacing the value of cases, causing fewer and fewer to be resolved on the merits. Studies show that rising litigation costs are primarily due to the longer length of time it takes to process cases through the system.

Expedited jury trials were adopted to reduce the strain on courts by limiting the time spent on smaller-dollar cases. These trials have smaller juries and allow five hours for each side to present their case. The format saves expense for both sides and leads to faster justice for Californians.

“This measure will give more Californians access to timely justice and help our underfunded courts manage their caseloads,” said CAOC President Lee Harris.

SB 1012 is expected to be amended to add an additional tier for cases above \$50,000 in an effort to boost court efficiencies. The goal is to work with stakeholders to develop processes and procedures for this new tier of cases, including reasonable limits on the amount of discovery and number of expert witnesses, as well as incorporating technology to more efficiently try cases.

After the Senate approval on a 25-to-10 vote, the measure goes to the Assembly 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:

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