



CAOC-sponsored bills protecting Californians from sexual predators, data breaches advance

AB 3080, AB 1870 and SB 1121 passed by Appropriations Committees

SACRAMENTO (May 25, 2018) – Bills sponsored by Consumer Attorneys of California protecting Californians from sexual predators and corporate data breaches were approved by their respective Appropriations Committees at the State Capitol today.

Assembly Bill 3080 by Asm. Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher (D-San Diego), passed by the Assembly Appropriations Committee, will ensure that workers will not be forced to resolve claims involving workplace sexual assault, harassment or discrimination in a secret arbitration proceeding. The bill also prevents employers from prohibiting employees from disclosing sexual harassment in the workplace as a condition of employment

By requiring these claims to be resolved in private rather than in a public proceeding in court or a state agency, and by requiring employees to sign non-disclosure agreements, businesses can in some cases allow serial harassers to continue their misconduct for years. “If workers can’t work without signing away civil rights, and can’t complain unless it’s in secret in a stacked, shadow court system, those rights aren’t worth the paper they’re written on,” [the Sacramento Bee editorial board wrote in support of AB 3080](#).

AB 3080 also prohibits employers from threatening, retaliating against or firing workers because they refuse to consent to forced arbitration. The bill is co-sponsored by CAOC, the California Labor Federation and SAG-AFTRA, the union that represents actors, broadcasters and journalists.

Assembly Bill 1870, the SHARE (Stopping Harassment and Reporting Extension) Act, also gained approval from the Assembly Appropriations Committee today. It will extend the time to file claims of harassment and discrimination under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act from one year to three years. The bill is jointly authored by Asm. Eloise Gomez Reyes (D-San Bernardino), Asm. Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) and Asm. Marie Waldron (R-Escondido) and is co-sponsored by CAOC along with the California Employment Lawyers Association and Equal Rights Advocates.

Senate Bill 1121 by Sen. Bill Dodd (D-Napa) passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill is in response to last year’s Equifax data breach that exposed personal and financial information, including in some cases Social Security and driver’s license numbers, of more than 148 million U.S. consumers. SB 1121 will add teeth to California’s existing data breach statute and motivate businesses to better protect against data piracy. CAOC co-sponsors the bill along with CALPIRG.

Because consumers whose data was exposed by Equifax did not have a direct relationship with Equifax and could not be considered “customers” under the current law, SB 1121 will ensure that “consumers,” not just “customers,” are covered by data breach protections. The bill will also allow consumers to seek redress for up to four years from the time they suffer financial harm, not from the time of the breach. In addition, it will discourage breaches by adding damages and clarify that consumers can join together in class actions to hold negligent companies accountable.

San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera wrote, in [a San Francisco Chronicle op-ed supporting SB 1121](#), that the bill will “provide substantial motivation to companies who might otherwise be inclined to consider data breaches an acceptable cost of doing business.”

AB 3080 and AB 1870 will now be heard on the Assembly floor, while SB 1121 will be taken up by the full Senate.

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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