



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Extended use of expedited trials sent to governor

CAOC-sponsored AB 555 will lead to quicker resolution of more cases

SACRAMENTO (Sept. 2, 2015) – More small civil cases will be resolved quickly in California under a bill co-sponsored by Consumer Attorneys of California that is headed to Gov. Jerry Brown.

The state Assembly granted final approval today to AB 555 and the measure now goes to the governor's desk.

AB 555 makes the state's existing Expedited Jury Trial statute, which was enacted through the efforts of CAOC in 2011 but has been under-utilized largely because of insurance industry resistance, mandatory for all limited jurisdiction cases under \$25,000, with a series of opt-out exceptions and a reinstated right to appeal.

Authored by Assemblyman Luis Alejo (D-Watsonville) and co-sponsored by the California Defense Counsel, AB 555 also removes the sunset provision from the state's current voluntary Expedited Jury Trial statute and provides some procedural fixes that previously caused confusion.

Expedited jury trials were adopted to reduce the strain on the resources of California courts facing severe budget cuts. The format saves time and expense for both sides and is ideal for cases involving smaller dollar amounts that are prone to getting lost in the system, leading to delays that are a hardship for those who have been injured, cheated or otherwise harmed. Under AB 555, expedited jury trials will involve juries of no more than eight members, with each side limited to no more than five hours to present its case, including voir dire.

"AB 555 will go a long way toward helping injured Californians get their day in court and receive resolution more quickly, while easing the burden on our overloaded court dockets," said CAOC President Brian D. Chase.

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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