



# CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

*Seeking Justice for All*

## Senate approves CAOC-backed bill to protect seniors abandoned by assisted living facilities during a crisis

SB 314 is response to nursing home residents left behind in 2017 wildfires

**SACRAMENTO (April 4, 2019)** – The California State Senate today approved a Consumer Attorneys of California-backed bill addressing the abandonment of seniors in assisted living facilities during emergencies that put the frail elderly in harm’s way.

Senate Bill 314 by Sen. Bill Dodd (D-Napa), co-sponsored by CAOC and California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, would give assisted living facilities more incentive to protect residents in emergency situations. The vote was 36-0.

The measure was inspired by the October 2017 Wine Country wildfires. As flames closed in on two Santa Rosa senior homes, staff members fled, leaving behind about 100 elderly residents, many with walkers or wheelchairs. One of the facilities burned to the ground, and dozens of residents likely would have died without a rescue effort by family and emergency responders.

SB 314 would update the Enhanced Remedies section of the Elder Abuse and Dependent Adult Civil Protection Act (EADACPA) and expand on the existing legal liability faced by those who hurt or allow harm to elderly dependents. It would add “abandonment” to the list of acts that could lead to increased civil penalties for caregivers, giving facilities additional motivation to assist the frail elderly in their care during emergency situations.

California’s 150,000 elderly residents of assisted living facilities are not able to protect themselves during emergencies due to dementia, physical disabilities or frail health, and their safety is entirely dependent on staff members and administrators.

“We thank the California Senate for coming to the aid of California seniors,” said Consumer Attorneys of California president Mike Arias. “The staff at elder-care facilities need to step up at times of crisis. This bill gives them extra motivation to do the right thing.”

*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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