



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Brown signs CAOC-backed bill providing new protections for child sex-abuse victims

SB 755 limits marathon psychological examinations of vulnerable youths

SACRAMENTO (July 25, 2017) – Gov. Jerry Brown has signed a bill sponsored by Consumer Attorneys of California protecting child sex-abuse victims from abusive marathon psychological examinations.

[Senate Bill 755](#), authored by Sen. Jim Beall (D-San Jose), will put limits on lengthy psychological examinations of children under age 15 who have suffered suspected sexual abuse.

Civil lawsuits are often the only way a victim and their family can seek justice and the compensation needed to offset the costs of treating mental and physical trauma caused by abuse. But attorneys who represent children in such civil cases report a disturbing practice: Defense team experts who conduct unnecessarily long and abusive psychological exams.

SB 755 will help address such injustices by putting a limit of no more than three hours, inclusive of breaks, on any psychological testing of a child who is the victim of suspected sexual abuse.

One particularly awful case stands out: A therapist conducting an exam denied a 6-year-old boy a bathroom break until he wet his pants. The therapist then angrily accused the child of lying about the alleged abuse. The exam was stopped only after the child's attorney heard yelling through the door.

Defense teams have conducted marathon examinations even in cases involving abusers already in prison after criminal trials established most of the facts for a civil case. For example, after a summer camp aide in Morgan Hill was sentenced to 60 years in prison for molesting a 3-year-old girl, a defense psychologist in the subsequent civil case interrogated the child for five hours about her parent's separation, connecting her parent's marital problems to the molestation. The little girl was left an emotional basket case.

By setting a time limit, SB 755 will help prevent the sort of trauma that can be inflicted on very young children already suffering because of sexual abuse.

“Gov. Brown has taken an important step to help protect the most vulnerable among us – our children,” said CAOC President Greg Bentley. “SB 755 will put in place common-sense limits that will ensure sexually abused children don't become victims anew as their families seek civil justice.”

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:

Eric Bailey, CAOC Communications Director, 916-669-7122, ebailey@caoc.org