



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Court funding in State Capitol spotlight Tuesday

CAOC will keep focus on consumer impact

SACRAMENTO (Feb. 11, 2013) – The effect of California’s ongoing court budget cuts on consumers will be the topic of an Assembly Judiciary Committee hearing Tuesday (Feb. 12) in Sacramento. “The Access to Justice Crisis Facing California Families” is the title of the hearing that will be chaired by Assemblymember Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont) and will get underway at 1:30 p.m. in Room 447 of the State Capitol.

Consumer Attorneys of California Past President Niall McCarthy, co-chair of the Open Courts Coalition that is advocating for restoring court budget cuts, is scheduled to testify at the hearing. He will present details of how the court closures and staffing reductions that have resulted from budget cuts take a toll on Californians who seek justice in civil matters. “These cuts hit no one harder than the working class families who constitute the bulk of CAOC members’ clients,” McCarthy said. “We are working to educate members of the Legislature on the harsh effects of court underfunding on middle class Californians.”

“Our courts serve people’s basic needs in many ways they may not think of,” said CAOC President Brian Kabateck. “The courts are essential in protecting victims of domestic violence and elder abuse, in helping parents adopt. The services of veterans’ courts, drug courts and small claims courts are crucial. Closing courtrooms and entire courthouses puts justice physically out of reach for many Californians, and for others their needs can be met only by taking an entire day off from work and wasting hours waiting in long lines. This is unacceptable.”

The amount of general fund revenue directed to California’s courts has decreased by more than 30 percent over the past five years, a reduction of \$1.1 billion. The governor’s proposed 2013-14 budget includes using \$200 million earmarked for court construction to offset cuts to court operations funds.

Tuesday’s hearing will be audible online at <http://ajud.assembly.ca.gov/hearings>.

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:

**J.G. Preston, CAOC Press Secretary, 916-669-7126, jgpreston@caoc.org
Eric Bailey, CAOC Communications Director, 916-669-7122, ebailey@caoc.org**