



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

CAOC-sponsored bill to eliminate unreasonable restrictions on voir dire passes California Senate

SB 658 will help ensure fair and impartial juries

SACRAMENTO (May 15, 2017) – A bill sponsored by Consumer Attorneys of California that will help ensure fair and impartial juries in California courtrooms was approved by the state Senate today on a unanimous vote.

[Senate Bill 658](#), authored by Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), addresses the issue of arbitrary and unreasonable restrictions on the questioning of potential members of a jury by attorneys during the process known as *voir dire*. Some courts have limited *voir dire* to as little as 30 minutes in unlimited civil jurisdiction cases. That is counter to current California law, which states that each party in civil cases has the right to examine prospective jurors without a blanket time limit.

SB 658 retains judicial discretion but sets out factors that must be considered when establishing the length of time for *voir dire*. Those factors will ensure there is adequate time for questioning without automatic or inflexible limits. SB 658 also addresses issues that often arise once jury selection begins by specifically requiring judges to reevaluate how much time is needed for questioning and allow additional time if warranted.

“The selection of an unbiased jury benefits all parties and is crucial to maintaining the integrity of our courts,” said Consumer Attorneys of California President Greg Bentley.

SB 658 will now be taken up by the California Assembly where it will first be heard by the Judiciary Committee.

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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