

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**  
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**Politics - Not Just for the Rich and Famous**

**by Richard A. Huver**

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How do you clear out a room of 200 plaintiffs' lawyers in less than 30 seconds? Start talking about a political fundraiser. And if you want to make sure everyone is working, try making phone calls asking for contributions. Suddenly, everyone is in deposition, trial, a meeting, out of the office, or on vacation. And if you do get someone on the phone, you will hear as many excuses for why someone cannot/will not/does not want to contribute to a political campaign as you would about why someone cannot/will not/does not go to the gym. But it should not be this way. **Like it or not, what happens politically directly affects us, our clients and our practices.**

How many readers can name one piece of legislation that passed in California within the last 12 months which directly impacts the rights of your clients and/or your practice of law? How about naming one piece of anti-consumer or anti-lawyer legislation that was defeated? Too difficult? Try this question: how many votes are required in the Assembly or the Senate to pass or defeat legislation? Still don't know the answer? Then it is time to get educated.

Politics is not just for the wealthy. Maybe you cannot afford to contribute financially in a given year. That does not mean you can or should ignore what is happening. I am not suggesting everyone needs to become intimately familiar with the daily comings and goings of Sacramento. There already is an organization staffed with well-qualified individuals who do this for a living -- Consumer Attorneys of California and people like Don Green, Nancy Drabble, Nancy Peverini and Lea-Ann Tratten.

But we all have the responsibility to be involved at some level in what happens in Sacramento. That might mean pledging to do your part financially to help elect consumer-friendly legislators. It might mean helping in the political process locally, countywide or even statewide, such as meeting with local legislators on a regular basis or attending Lobby Day, the one day a year that CAOC organizes a day-long event where you can meet and talk with elected legislators in Sacramento. There are many ways we can all take a more active role in the political process.

It should start with becoming more educated about what is happening. On that score, there are a host of available sources of information, starting with our own ***Trial Bar News***. Take

a look at the Legislative Law column or pick up the most recent copy of *Forum* magazine, CAOC's monthly publication, which often includes a description of legislative activity in Sacramento. If you are a member of CAOC (and you should be), you can also receive Legislative Updates, short e-mail explanations of recent legislation proposed, passed or defeated. This information is also posted to our General List Serve. Again, there are many avenues of information available to learn about what is happening in Sacramento and it requires just minutes of your time a month.

Make it your business to start learning a little more about how the politics of Sacramento affect your rights, your client's rights and your practice of law. And if you are already "in the loop," then I am preaching to the choir.