

Pitching In

I am in the middle of buying a new building for my law firm. The good news is that the space will be ideal for what we do. It is way bigger and way more expensive than anything I ever imagined for us. There is the bad news. I'm extremely cash-strapped for the next couple years as I try to make this deal happen.

With all that going on, I was a little bummed out when I opened the mail and found a letter from CAOC President Niall McCarthy and President Elect Brian Kabateck asking me for a huge amount of money for CAOC election year political funding. The timing was awful. Any amount of money this year would be hard and doing what they wanted me to do would be next to impossible. And then I got an email. They wanted to talk on the phone. And so we did. And of course they asked me for the money. And of course I agreed to somehow make it happen. I think it will all work out. I think I will end up making more money because of saying, "yes." That's how life seems to happen in my experience.

I'm not sure if most of us realize how good we really have it in California and how much CAOC does for us to keep it that way. I have trial lawyer friends all over the country. And it's ROUGH out there. There are caps on non-economic damages. There are draconian fee-shifting provisions. There are States in which the plaintiff recovers nothing if he or she is at fault even 1%. I predict there will soon be fee caps enacted in a number of other States. All my friends want to come practice law in California. At least here we truly get a fair shake.

CAOC's political team does a ton of work to keep it that way. On the election side, they quickly and effectively identify incumbents and candidates that are both friendly and hostile to the justice system and consumers. As importantly, they educate candidates and legislators regarding our issues. They frame, deliver and fund honest messages about our clients and what we do for them. They protect our friends, they protect our clients and they protect us.

This election year is a time of change and opportunity. Initiatives passed in 2010 will change district lines. **Those changes have created an opportunity to increase the democratic majorities in both the Senate and Assembly, and possibly capture a 2/3 super majority. Reaching that milestone would mean the restoration of court funding.** If we can't get to trial, we are not getting paid. It's that simple. And this year is that important. The legislative agenda includes *Howell*, *Conception* and MICRA. Every year, CAOC singlehandedly defeats dozens of bills seeking to impose immunities, damage caps, and otherwise restrict access to juries. Each of those issues has a potentially enormous impact on your practices.

Along with others, I am a Political Captain for CAOC this year. I will be calling many of you and asking you to sacrifice just like I am. When I do, understand where I am coming from. We all need to work together to make this work. Don't be penny wise and pound foolish. Give till it hurts. Don't let insurance companies and corporate interests cheat your clients and ruin your practices. Pick up the phone when we call. And give until it hurts. Just like I did. **TBN**

by John H. Gomez

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Gomez is CASD's President for 2012. John

believes passionately in improving our world though both the law and community service. John's community passions are the Latino community, kids at risk, drunk driving prevention, foster children and legal services

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John "Trial Lawyer of the Year" and has awarded him six "Outstanding Trial Lawyer"

awards. His Gomez Law Firm is an eight-

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Most importantly, John is the devoted

husband of Lisa and the proud father of

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