



# CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

*Seeking Justice for All*

## CAOC calls proposed \$150M courts cut a civil disgrace Could usher in return of courthouse closures and justice delayed

**SACRAMENTO (June 15, 2011)** – Consumer Attorneys of California President John A. Montevideo on Wednesday called a proposal to cut another \$150 million from state court operations “a gut punch” for California citizens who rely on the judicial system as a bedrock of democracy.

The proposed cut comes after state lawmakers already slashed more than \$500 million from the courts over the past two years and very likely could send the system careening back toward a routine of courthouse closures.

Montevideo noted that the state was able to end a period of court closures last year only with substantial fee increases for filing cases and other legal actions as well as shifting money away from future courthouse construction. It remains unclear how the latest proposed cut could be absorbed, though court officials have indicated it very likely could lead to renewed periodic closures of courthouses up and down the state.

“Our courts are not only an important pillar of society, they’re a separate, distinct branch of government,” Montevideo said. “This latest call for slicing more money out of the system is gut punch for every citizen in California.”

“In recent years, we’ve endured the spectacle of courthouse doors padlocked on regular business days,” he said. “Our organization and others worked very hard with court officials to make sure those closures came to an end. Strip away another \$150 million and we very likely will see more of the same.”

Shuttering of the courts has a profound impact on the already overcrowded dockets, Montevideo noted, causing cases to drag on for months if not years longer.

“There is a saying that justice delayed is justice denied,” Montevideo said. “And make no mistake, court closures lead to significant delays in moving cases through the system. This affects everybody – consumers, businesses, family law and criminal cases alike. Only wrongdoers benefit when justice is delayed. As a civilized society, we must do better than this.”

*Consumer Attorneys of California is a professional organization for nearly 3,000 plaintiffs’ attorneys representing consumers who utilize the civil justice system to seek accountability against wrongdoers in cases involving personal injury, product liability, environmental degradation and other causes.*

**For more information:**

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