



## Update from CAOC Micha Star Liberty

CAOC PRESIDENT

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**ADVOCATE**  
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# Law in the time of coronavirus

STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS EXTENDED, LESS RESTRICTIONS ON REMOTE DEPOSITIONS,  
MORE TIME TO BRING CASES TO TRIAL

## SACRAMENTO UPDATE

As I write this, we are a couple days removed from a very big victory that will help any California attorney struggling to practice in the civil courts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we all know too well, the health crisis caused California legal authorities to shut down courthouses up and down the state and put the justice system in a tailspin. It took a lot of 24/7 advocacy by our team at Consumer Attorneys of California, but first the governor and then the Judicial Council answered our call for help and took steps to ensure access to justice and maintain legal rights during this crisis.

On April 6, the Judicial Council acted to extend the statute of limitations until the crisis is declared over, throttle back restrictions on remote depositions and add an extra six months to the five-year rule for bringing cases to trial.

Those actions followed a March 27 emergency order enacted by Gov. Gavin Newsom that gave Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye and the California Judicial Council authority to take necessary steps to ensure legal rights aren't undercut. The governor also used his powers to directly suspend the statute that had been a barrier to attorneys trying to use remote video depositions and electronic service of process as a workaround during the health crisis.

Try as we might, the governor and Judicial Council stopped short of providing all the remediation we felt necessary. So, we are pressing ahead to pave the way for electronic service of process and allow for urgent approval of minor's compromise petitions. Because our advocacy efforts never stop, still on our to-do list is the creation of a uniform statewide standard for rescheduling of trials that were suspended because of the health crisis.

Just getting to where we are today was an all-hands-on-deck effort by CAOC and our leadership along with able assistance from leaders of our regional trial lawyer associations. CAOC Chief Executive Nancy Drabble has truly shined through our lobbying push, demonstrating her standing as a force to be reckoned with inside the state Capitol.

Also deserving of a shout out are CAOC Legislative Counsel Saveena Takhar and Political Director Lea-Ann Tratten, who provided sage advice in our dealings with the governor's office.

If you have questions about how to interpret the actions by the governor and Judicial Council, a good starting point is to take a few minutes to watch the free webinar CAOC produced featuring me and Nancy Drabble. We explained what the government actions portend for your practice and answered many questions that can help illuminate your own path in dealing with this unprecedented crisis. You can access the video at <https://tinyurl.com/COVIDCourts>.

And if you have further queries after watching the webinar, feel free to contact Saveena Takhar at [stakhar@caoc.org](mailto:stakhar@caoc.org) or Nancy Drabble at [nancyd@caoc.org](mailto:nancyd@caoc.org).

## COVID-19 emergency toolkit

As a service to attorneys around the state as well as the general public dealing with civil litigation, CAOC launched a special online COVID-19 "Coping With Crisis" emergency toolkit. Actually, it's a lot of web pages. You'll find links to key resources for helping you get through these tough times, including business help, information on small business loans, and the latest news on how courts are handling the crisis as well as links to legal, government and health sites that have even more information. All of these web pages are being updated with the latest on a real-time basis.

Two of my favorite parts of this valuable web resource are the court status page, which provides updates on the latest rule changes and other actions from the Superior Courts in all 58 California counties, and the "additional resources" web page, which is awash with links to key documents – like the aforementioned actions by the governor and Judicial Council – as well as the latest CAOC communications and resources to help you with your practice in these uncertain times.

We also have a special page for all COVID-19-related webinars we're producing to help your practice. Many of them are free, and more will be added to the list in the weeks ahead.

## Speaking of MCLE...

Given that the health crisis has sent us all indoors and shut down big-draw events in the sports world, entertainment and other venues, CAOC, like CAALA, had to make some tough decisions in recent weeks to postpone or cancel our popular seminars in the Wine Country and Palm Springs. We're not alone, as local trial lawyer associations throughout the state and nation have had to take similar steps.

But rest assured: CLE doesn't stop because of a pandemic. CAOC and CAALA are offering more webinars than ever providing legal education credits. CAOC is also producing free online sessions from our Business Friends addressing ways to cope with the crisis. You can find CAOC's offerings at [www.caoc.org/SWL](http://www.caoc.org/SWL).

In the months ahead, please take care to stay safe and take time to enjoy the good things in life even during these tough times. We are lucky to live and practice in a state that has health care workers and government officials who are doing their best to protect the public. We're all going to have to practice patience through the weeks and months ahead, but we'll get through this by sticking together.

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