



From the President

**Elizabeth Hernandez**

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## Uber pulls its ballot measure

A THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO HELPED SECURE THIS MAJOR VICTORY FOR INJURED CALIFORNIANS

For nearly nine months, our community confronted one of the most consequential threats to injured Californians in recent memory. Uber advanced a sweeping ballot measure designed to rewrite the California Constitution and restrict what crash victims could recover. Had it passed, it would have made it harder for ordinary people to access medical care, secure legal representation, and hold negligent parties accountable. It was a direct challenge to the values CAALA stands for and to the rights of the people we serve.

Uber believed its money, its head start, and its political machinery would overwhelm anyone who opposed it. But it underestimated California's consumer-protection community. It underestimated CAOC and the Alliance Against Corporate Abuse (AACA). It underestimated the strength of state's plaintiff bar associations: CAALA, CAOIE, OCTLA, CASD and CELA. All played critical roles in supporting CAOC's disciplined and far-reaching efforts.

From the moment the measure was filed, CAOC stepped into the fight with clarity and courage. They built a countermeasure, exposed Uber's record on safety and sexual assault, and ensured communities across the state understood what was at stake. CAALA worked closely with CAOC throughout this effort. Although questions and concerns arose within our membership about aspects of the AACA strategy, I made it a priority as CAALA President and as a member of CAOC's War Council to help calm frustrations and maintain unity. It required significant effort at times, but CAALA stood shoulder-to-shoulder with CAOC: financially, strategically, and publicly. Many of our leaders contributed, many members engaged, and our organization remained united even under intense pressure. That unity mattered.

Faced with a disciplined, aggressive, and principled campaign led by CAOC and AACA, Uber came to the table. The result was an agreement that protected injured people, strengthened rideshare safety, and brought new consumer protections to the medical-lien industry. On June 25, Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 623 into law, enacting annual criminal background checks for rideshare drivers, expanding disqualifying offenses, and allowing women riders and drivers to choose women matches. The law also implemented new consumer protections: tying lien-based medical charges to the 70th percentile of billed charges for comparable care in the area; preventing outside investors from buying a victim's medical debt at a discount and demanding full payment; requiring disclosure of those financial arrangements; increasing transparency to medical-lien arrangements; and prohibiting self-dealing that prioritizes profit over patient care. Health insurance, Medicare, Medi-Cal, and workers' compensation remain untouched. Most importantly, Uber's ballot measure was pulled from the November ballot, and CAOC's countermeasure was withdrawn as well. The constitutional threat is gone.

This was a historic victory for every Californian who deserves safety, fairness, and access to justice. It demonstrated that even the most powerful corporations can be held accountable when our community stands united, stays disciplined, and refuses to back down. This moment also underscored the extraordinary significance of CAOC's legislative program. Their work in the Capitol, year after year, bill after bill, is the backbone of consumer protection in California. This victory was not an isolated achievement; it was the product of decades of disciplined, relentless advocacy that has made CAOC one of

the most effective consumer-protection organizations in the nation.

This battle showed clearly that it takes a village. I want to extend a profound thank you to CAOC President Doug Seltzer. Doug's leadership, steadiness, and strategic clarity were instrumental throughout this fight.

I also want to recognize the extraordinary work of the CAOC team: Nancy Drabble, Lea-Ann Tratten, Samantha Helton, Nancy Peverini, Laurie Klimchok, Jacqueline Serna, Saveena Takhar, and Natalie Robertson. Each played a critical role in navigating the legal, legislative, communications, and campaign challenges of this effort. Their dedication and expertise helped carry this victory across the finish line.

To CAOC's War Council – our judgment, strategy, and unity were essential. Our group worked tirelessly to anticipate threats, shape messaging, and maintain discipline across the campaign. I want to acknowledge all members of the War Council (listed alphabetically):

**Greg Bentley**, Bentley & More

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I also want to thank the AACA campaign strategists. Their rapid response, message discipline, and ability to manage a high-pressure statewide campaign were invaluable. They kept our coalition focused, coordinated, and effective at every stage.

I want to thank the CAALA leaders and members who stepped up, financially and with their time, throughout this battle. I am equally grateful to CAALA's Executive Committee, whose engagement kept us closely connected to our membership. Together, we listened early, identified concerns, and ensured I could raise issues directly with CAOC and AACA as CAALA President and a member of the CAOC War Council. When our members needed clarity, CAOC and the War Council responded quickly and directly. Their collaboration allowed CAALA to provide our members with the information and understanding they needed. Working together, CAOC and CAALA addressed concerns in real time and maintained trust, unity, and alignment throughout a fast-moving, high-pressure campaign.

Looking ahead, CAALA members have an essential role. This victory showed what we accomplish when we are united and when we trust CAOC. Supporting CAOC-endorsed candidates and legislation is one of the most effective ways to protect the civil justice system. Engaging in CAALA's Political and Legislative Affairs Committee, participating in grassroots outreach, and serving on CAOC interview panels all strengthen our collective voice and ensure lawmakers hear directly from those who fight for injured Californians every day. Engagement is not optional; it is how we safeguard the victories we have earned and secure those still ahead. ♦