



# JUSTICE THROUGH LAWS

THE TIME TO CHANGE LAWS IS **NOW**

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**E**very attorney understands that the law is not perfect. You research and argue the law, advocating forcefully for your client. But at times the law just does not work. It needs some sort of change. How do you change it? One effective and fun way to change the law is by drafting a resolution for the Conference of California Bar Associations (CCBA). Debate and discuss the proposal with your colleagues. Ready your proposal for legislative action and participate in its becoming law. And guess what? CCBA is now accepting proposals for its 2017 legislative program.

For the past eighty years, CCBA has provided a unique forum for California lawyers to work together to address issues of importance and provide leadership in improving the law. CCBA's motto is "Justice through laws," and the organization attempts to serve as the voice of the lawyers of California. CCBA employs a lobbyist in Sacramento to implement its legislative program and has for the past several years been the most effective lobbying body in the State of California, regularly helping to enact fifteen to twenty changes to the law each year.

## WHO MAY PARTICIPATE

CCBA participation is open to members of local, minority, statewide, and specialty voluntary bar associations in California. Participation is also open to authorized representatives of recognized bar association delegations; authorized representatives of certain other parties; and resolution authors who have secured the consent of ten members of the State Bar of California to serve as coauthors of the proposed resolution.

## BIRTH OF A RESOLUTION

The deadline for submitting resolutions to your local bar association is February 2017. See [calconference.org/html/submit2016](http://calconference.org/html/submit2016). Proposed resolutions may cover a wide range of issues. The only limit is whether a resolution is germane to the practice and administration of the law. A resolution is germane if it concerns the legal profession and the people of the State of California and is designed to promote the improvement of the administration of justice; the education of the profession and the public concerning the justice system and laws; the science of jurisprudence; professional excellence; or respect for the law.

Presentation of resolutions at the conference and preconference meetings helps educate and familiarize the del-

egates with all areas of the law, including areas in which individual delegates don't typically practice. The related media coverage and outreach also help educate the public.

## DRAFTING A RESOLUTION

Your proposed resolution must specifically propose an amendment to California law, Rules of Procedure, or Rules of Court. It must also include a two section statement of reasons, including "The Problem" and "The Solution." For the problem section, simply (in two hundred words or less) state what the problem is with the existing law (that is, identify the nature, severity, and frequency of the undesirable consequences that result from existing law.) And for the solution, simply (in three hundred words or less) explain what your resolution does to solve the problem. Be cognizant of any unintended consequences and address likely counterarguments where possible. Additionally, if practical, provide information about current or past legislation (bills introduced into the legislature) or resolutions on the topic of your resolution.

## THE PROCESS

Attorneys interested in making changes to the law should reach out to their local bar association or delegation to CCBA. San Francisco attorneys can visit [ccba.sfbar.org](http://ccba.sfbar.org). Your local delegation chairs are an excellent resource to guide you through the process, which certainly does not end with your proposal. Each participating bar association has the opportunity to champion (or oppose) your proposed resolution. Resolutions that are supported by a local delegation are then considered by the other participating bar associations, as well as the CCBA legislative committee, before moving on to the annual conference.

The conference assembles more than five hundred authorized delegates from participating bar associations, who



*Top: The BASF delegation for 2016 included Ciarán O'Sullivan, Frankie Ross, Richard Zitrin, John Hansen, Oliver Dunlap, Jim Lamping, Deborah Goodman, Joachim B. Steinberg, Alicia Gámez, Catherine Rucker, Mary Vail, Matthew Mallett, Olga Dombrowskaya, Nate Kelly, Alan Ramos (former BASF delegate), Ujuala Singh, and BASF Board Member John Worden. Bottom left: BASF delegate Nate Kelly. Bottom center: Judge Carol Brosnahan and BASF delegate James Brosnahan. Bottom right: BASF delegate James Marion.*

draft, analyze, lobby, and vote on approximately one hundred resolutions. At the 2016 conference, which concluded October 2, participating bar associations and individuals submitted more than one hundred resolutions. Of those, more than fifty were debated on the floor of the conference.

Resolutions passed by the conference are prioritized by the CCBA board and legislative committee, with input from CCBA lobbyist Larry Doyle, and are then lobbied for in the California legislature. Some resolutions may be returned to the sponsoring bar organization for lobbying with coordination and assistance of CCBA.

You already knew the problem and now you know a solution. Contact CCBA or your local delegation for more information and help strengthen the voice of California's lawyers and improve "Justice through laws."

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