



CITATIONS

SEPTEMBER – TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX



VENTURA COUNTY LEGAL COMMUNITY MOURNS PASSING OF JUDGE DAVID LONG

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Kristine Tijam

Upon recently finishing another year of teaching at the Ventura campus of The Colleges of Law, my students surprised me with such thoughtful cards and gifts on behalf of their class, one of which was a beautiful clock with the following inscription:

A truly great mentor is hard to find, difficult to part with, impossible to forget. Thank you for being a part of my journey. I appreciate your guidance and dedication in pushing me to do my best. You are such an amazing model to follow. I appreciate everything you do!

Looking back at my legal career so far, my mentors have played a significant role in helping me become the attorney I am today. After passing the bar exam, I joined Procter, Shyer & Winter, LLP (now Shyer & Winter, LLP) as a civil litigation attorney, where I continue to practice eight years later. Navigating the steep learning curve during the first few months of practice came with a lot of feedback and mentorship from the other attorneys at the firm. I learned everything about the practice of law from the firm's partners, **Jim Procter**, **Lisa Shyer**, **Megan Winter**, and associate **Veronica Webb**. Having them as mentors was instrumental in my professional development. Early in practice, I quickly learned just how "small" the legal community was when I frequently encountered other attorneys and judges who knew our firm's partners. So many have spoken very highly of them, and I share the same sentiments.

My first few months at the firm were difficult and high pressure while I learned as much as I could about the actual practice of law. I was quickly given depositions and hearings. Some of my earliest assignments that I can recall were to assist Lisa with a motion for summary judgment (which was granted and upheld on appeal) and motions in limine. I remember working all day at the office, then coming home and reading the Rutter Group Civil Litigation Practice Guide at night, often researching procedural and substantive law at odd hours. At the office, receiving redlined motions and reports was a frequent occurrence for me. However, all of the feedback, challenges, and hours spent learning about the practice of law are what developed my skill set and

knowledge, shaping me into the attorney I am today. I appreciate and am grateful for the trust and confidence that our partners had in me as a new attorney, as well as all of the time and patience that our firm's attorneys contributed to my development on top of their already hectic schedules.

Aside from Jim, Lisa, Megan, and Veronica helping me expand my knowledge of substantive and procedural law, they also served as models of litigation styles I truly respect, admire, and agree with. It is no secret that litigation can become quite contentious at times. As a new attorney, it was sometimes difficult to navigate situations that became combative and determine which battles were worth fighting. Even under high-stress and high-pressure situations, I continually observed them to nevertheless practice with integrity, respect, professionalism, and ethics. Their practice styles taught me one of the most important human aspects about lawyering: we can be zealous advocates while remaining respectful, professional, and ethical in our dealings with opposing counsel.

My favorite part of my practice continues to be public entity litigation. For much of my legal career, I worked closely with Jim Procter in representing cities in a broad array of litigation. I always appreciated the trust he had in me and the working relationship we shared. It was a privilege to learn from him, discuss case strategy together, and expand my knowledge on the unique aspects of public entity defense and civil litigation in general. Of course, it was also an honor to work for such a seasoned and accomplished trial attorney. (In 2008, the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association named Jim its Trial Lawyer of the Year, making him the only civil defense attorney in the award's history to receive that recognition from a predominantly plaintiffs' organization.)

Jim recently entered the next chapter of his career and is now a full-time mediator at Signature Resolution. While our firm is happy for him and wishes him the best, the change was bittersweet for all of us since it meant no longer being able to work with him after so many years together.

I continue to work with Lisa, Megan, and Veronica. We all share a wonderful relationship that has developed over the

years and transcends the confines of work. We continue to collaborate, learn from each other, and vent when needed. In fact, I talked out some of my ideas for this article with Lisa the evening before I began writing.

Prior to becoming President of VCBA, many of you reached out to share your congratulations and well wishes. VCBA past presidents and judges also shared their words of wisdom and experiences with me. I was touched by the thoughtfulness, and it further illustrated the collegial nature of our local legal community. Even short conversations like those have provided me with valuable insight that I consider to be another form of casual "mentorship."

My story is not unique. We all have had mentors throughout our lives who helped us develop professionally and personally. My experiences and recognition of the role my mentors played in my life illustrated to me the importance of paying that forward. Recently, Lisa has been hiring summer interns to provide law firm experience to college students, especially to show them the daily life of an attorney. We have worked closely with our interns not only on work, but also to give them our experiences and insight as they make decisions about their futures. In my capacity as an adjunct professor at The Colleges of Law, I do my best also to provide mentorship and guidance to my students, and have observed the same from the other faculty and leadership. Through VCBA's Community Outreach Committee and the Attorneys Sharing Knowledge ("A.S.K.") program, local attorneys, judges, and other legal professionals have been able to speak to thousands of students to provide legal information, share their experiences, and expose them to careers in law. So many of you in our legal community have also contributed in the same ways, and even well beyond that.

VCBA recently began administering a mentorship program named "Raising the Bar" for local college and law students interested in pursuing careers in law. The program, which was featured in the July 2026 issue of Citations, was originally created by Senior Deputy District Attorney **Amber Lee** as a partnership between the Ventura County District Attorney's Office

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from page 3

and the Office of the Public Defender. The program has expanded and will be administered by the Ventura County Bar Association to connect practicing attorneys from all areas with college and law school students who are interested in pursuing careers in law. More information is available at the following link: <https://www.vcba.org/raising-the-bar/>

As legal professionals, we all have valuable life experience and various paths that led us to where we are today. It is important to use our voices not only for the work that we do and causes we believe in, but also to support those who may also benefit from our experiences.



Kristine Tijam is a civil litigation attorney at Shyer & Winter, LLP and an adjunct law professor at The Colleges of Law. Her practice focuses on representing cities, businesses, and

individuals in various types of lawsuits. She can be reached at kristine@shyerwinter.com or (805) 603-8623.

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Staker|Rodriguez LLP welcomes Barbara Obradovic as Attorney



Staker|Rodriguez Law LLP is proud to congratulate Barbara Obradovic on passing the February 2026 California Bar Exam! Barbara brings more than 20 years of experience in the wills and trust arena

as a paralegal. We are delighted to welcome Barbara back to our office in her new role as an associate attorney (SBN: 368160), where she will continue the client-centered, detail-driven work that has defined her career.

Herring Imming Proudly Elevates Clark Lammers and Taylor Fuller as Law Partners



Herring Imming is proud to announce its elevation of **Clark Lammers** and **Taylor Fuller** as law partners effective immediately. Over the years, both have grown with Herring Imming, rising as family law stars in their own right. They have consistently exhibited brains, diligence, enthusiasm, and positivity. Accordingly, they have consistently promoted successful outcomes in our often challenging family law cases.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Re: The Devil in the Fine Print: Timeshares, Monsters, and the Law

CITATIONS, May 2026 Issue

This article truly understands something very unsettling about modern contract law that no one is telling the kids at law school. It is true nonetheless. If you can obliterate the very structure of our basic legal principles with clever drafting, there is no justice. And the Faustian reference was more than just ornamental. It gave all new meaning to the phrase "the devil is in the details."

Janet Varnell

Editor's Note: **Janet Varnell** is the managing partner of Varnell & Warwick in Tampa, Florida, a past Board President of Public Justice, the 2024 recipient of the National Consumer Law Center's Vern Countryman Award, and is the former Co-Chair of the National Association of Consumer Advocates (NACA).

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VENTURA COUNTY LEGAL COMMUNITY MOURNS PASSING OF JUDGE DAVID LONG



The Ventura County Bar lost a giant on July 29, 2026, with the passing of the **Honorable David W. Long (Ret.)**. Long's relationship with the local legal community spanned decades and nearly every seat in the profession: paralegal, lawyer, commissioner, judge and, after leaving the bench, mediator and arbitrator.

A Ventura High School graduate and proud Marine, Long found his way into the law after beginning his career as a claims adjuster. Ventura attorney **James McGahan** recruited him to work as a paralegal at Benton, Orr, Duvall & Buckingham and helped steer him toward law school. With only eleven undergraduate credits, Long entered the Ventura College of Law as a Special Student, passed the Baby Bar on his first try, graduated *cum laude*, passed the February 1983 bar examination and was sworn in as an attorney that year. He practiced with Henderson, Allen and LaRochelle, later formed Borrell and Long, and eventually returned to Benton, Orr, Duvall & Buckingham as a partner.

After approximately nine years at Benton Orr, Long was selected from a field of 127 applicants to become a Court Commissioner. Governor Pete Wilson appointed him to the Municipal Court in 1995 and to the Superior Court in 1997. Judge Long retired on May 16, 2011. He served for many years as the Supervising Civil Judge and, from late 1998 through

2009, presided over Mandatory Settlement Conferences in Courtroom 22. He was named Judge of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association in 2007 and received the Alternative Dispute Resolution Advocate of the Year award from the Ventura Center for Dispute Settlement in 2005.

For many Ventura lawyers, Courtroom 22 is where they knew Judge Long best. In a March 2014 *CITATIONS* profile, **William M. Grewe** recalled Long's combination of experience, preparation, humor and an instinct for the human side of a dispute. Asked why he so often greeted the insurance representatives first at settlement conferences, Long had a ready answer: "Of course! They brought the money."

Grewe recalled another settlement involving two lifelong friends whose business dispute had destroyed their friendship. After putting the settlement on the record, Long added one more term: each man was to call the other and invite him to a steak dinner, with the first person called picking up the check.

There was a more solemn side to that same instinct. Grewe recounted a case brought by two young Black servicemen who had been wrongly suspected of shoplifting and followed from a shopping center. After the case settled, Long came down from the bench, shook each man's hand and apologized "on behalf of the residents of the County of Ventura." Grewe described it as a small gesture that made a large statement.

Long's influence on the local profession extended well beyond his courtroom. He was a longtime member and two-term president of Ventura County's chapter of the American Inns of Court and advocated for its renaming in honor of Judge Jerome H. Berenson, whose example he deeply admired. As **Panda Kroll** recounted in a September 2019 *CITATIONS* article, Long remembered that the Inn's leadership deliberately put judges and lawyers on a first-name basis because, within the Inn, "we were all colleagues." He was also an enthusiastic participant in its programs, including the costumes and historical reenactments that became part of the chapter's lore.

Following his retirement from the bench, Long purchased Creative Dispute Resolution from the estate of his close friend **Paul Fritz** and continued doing what came naturally to him: helping lawyers and litigants resolve disputes. He eventually brought **David Karen** into the practice as his partner and formally retired from mediation in 2022.

The Marine Corps remained an enduring influence throughout Long's life. Grewe's 2014 profile identified Long's drill instructor, Staff Sgt. Manford C. Short, as the man who influenced him most. After surviving a heart attack in 2002, Long set out to find Short and learned that he had died. Long instead met Short's widow and grandson and told them what the Marine had meant to him. Until Mrs. Short's death, Long sent her a dozen roses each November 10, the Marine Corps birthday, in tribute to her husband.



And then there was **Shirley Critchfield**. Long and Shirley met in 1970, and by 1979 they were sharing their lives together. They waited to marry until Long became a licensed attorney. **Lori M. Dobrin's** May 2022 *CITATIONS* profile tells a story from their honeymoon that perhaps captures both Long's devotion to Shirley and his occasionally competing devotion to the law: during their nine-hour drive to the Ahwahnee Hotel, Long worked on files. When they arrived, he proudly announced to his new bride that he had managed to bill six hours along the way.

For all the hours Long devoted to the law, however, he apparently had no difficulty identifying his best decision. He often said that **the smartest thing he ever did was marry Shirley**, who gave him love, joy and stability.

Perhaps the simplest explanation for Long's long relationship with the profession is the one contained in his *Ventura County Star* obituary: **"He loved lawyers, lawyering and watching good lawyers at work."** He cherished the mentors and friends he made along the way, including **Jim McGahan, Jack Smiley, Paul Coffey** and his childhood friend **Ron Coleman**. But those who knew Dave Long will remember much more than his résumé: the bow ties, the Dodgers, golf, ham radio, dogs, music, jokes, Caribbean trips, Laphroaig and cigars, and a man who plainly enjoyed the people and the profession that occupied so much of his life.

Long is survived by his wife, Shirley Critchfield; his daughter, Lynnette; his son, Bill; his brothers, Philip and Norman; and a large extended family of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his daughter Nancy.

In preparing this remembrance, CITATIONS drew upon earlier articles preserving Judge Long's stories and history: William M. Grewe, "A Portrait of Dave Long," March 2014; Panda Kroll, "Honoring the Origin," September 2019; and Lori M. Dobrin, "Judge David Long — A Mediation Maven Settles Into Retirement," May 2022.

CITATIONS will run a feature in the October 2026 edition with remembrances of Judge David Long from the legal community. Please feel free to share your memories and photographs of Judge Long, for possible inclusion in the memorial article, by email to Sandra Rubio, Executive Director of VCBA, at sandra@vcba.org.



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NEWS FROM THE COURT

Judicial Assignments

Judge Jacquelyn D. Ruffin will be assigned to Department 41 at the Ventura Hall of Justice. All cases previously assigned to **Judge Kevin G. DeNoce** in Department 41 will be reassigned to Judge Jacquelyn D. Ruffin in Department 41 for all purposes as of August 31, 2026.

Administrative Order No. 26.13

Effective August 31, 2026, for all Juvenile Traffic Citations, the minor and at least one parent or legal guardian must appear in person. This requirement ensures that parents or legal guardians are fully informed of the incident, understand the outcome, and can assist the minor in making an informed decision and complying with any license restrictions or payment of fines and fees, if applicable.

Family Law Ex Parte Procedures Updated

The Ventura Superior Court has provided updated directions for family law ex parte requests, as of August 18, 2026, as indicated below:

DVRO, GVRO and WVRO matters assigned to Courtroom 34:

- Heard daily at 1:30 p.m. All requests may be decided on the papers only.
- Moving papers may be submitted by EMAIL, by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the hearing, at EmergencyRestrainingOrdersFamilyandCivil@ventura.courts.ca.gov. Any papers submitted after 9:00 a.m. will be ruled upon the next business day.
- Opposition papers may be submitted by EMAIL, by 11:00 a.m., for consideration by the court.
- Non-restraining order requests may NOT be submitted through this email proxy.
- Parties/attorneys without email access must present moving papers in person at the Hall of Justice family law clerk's window (Room 210) by 11:00 a.m.
- Timely notice as set forth in California Rules of Court is required.

DVRO matters assigned to Courtrooms 31, 32, 33 & 35:

- Heard daily at 11:30 a.m.
- Elder/Dependent Abuse Restraining Order requests heard daily at 11:30 a.m. in Courtroom 32 *only*.
- Moving papers may be submitted by EMAIL, by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the hearing, at EmergencyRestrainingOrdersFamilyandCivil@ventura.courts.ca.gov. Any papers submitted after 9:00 a.m. will be ruled upon the next business day.
- Opposition papers may be submitted by EMAIL, by 10:30 a.m., for consideration by the court.
- Non-restraining order requests may NOT be submitted through this email proxy.
- Parties/attorneys without email access must present moving papers in person at the Hall of Justice family law clerk's window (Room 210) by 9:30 a.m.
- Timely notice as set forth in California Rules of Court is required.

Non-Restraining-Order Ex Parte Requests

- Heard daily at 11:30 a.m. in Courtrooms 31, 32, 33 and 35. RESERVATIONS are required, and may be made by contacting the judicial secretary by phone.
- Courtroom 31, 32, and 35: (805) 289-8762
- Courtroom 33: (805) 289-8772

- Moving papers may be submitted through the eDelivery system, by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the hearing.
- Opposition papers may be submitted through the eDelivery system, by 10:30 a.m. on the day of the hearing.
- Parties/attorneys without the ability to complete/submit the papers electronically must present moving papers in person at the Hall of Justice Family Law Clerk's Office (Room 210) by 9:30 a.m. Non-electronic opposition papers must be presented by 10:30 a.m. in Room 210.
- If papers are not presented timely, the ex parte request will not be heard that day. **All applicable fees will be required.** If you are appearing in person, you may bring a check payable to the Ventura Superior Court. The court is unable to process cash or credit cards in the courtroom. Credit card, cash, and check payments can be processed in the Family Law Clerk's Office during normal business hours.

If you do not have an eDelivery account, select Online Services on the Court's homepage, then choose the eDelivery option to create an account. eDelivery is open for submission of documents on court days (Monday-Friday) from 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. eDelivery is not available for submission of documents before or after these hours, on weekends, or on court holidays.



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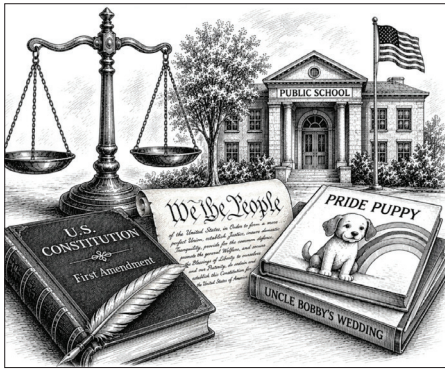
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MAHMOUD V. TAYLOR: PARENTAL RIGHTS, RELIGION AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM

By Mari K. Rockenstein

In the past few years, the courts have confronted many cases regarding parental rights and school curriculum, and religious liberty continues to be one of the most actively contested issues. *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, 606 U.S. 522 (2025), is a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision dealing with the intersection of public education curriculum, parental rights, and the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause. The case came to the court from Montgomery County, in the Washington, D.C., suburbs. With nearly 160,000 students enrolled during the 2024-25 school year, it is one of the nation's largest school systems and is in one of the most religiously diverse counties in the United States.

In a 6–3 decision issued on June 27, 2025, the Court ruled in favor of a group of Maryland parents, holding that a public-school district's refusal to provide advance notice and religious opt-outs for elementary-level instruction involving LGBTQ+ themed storybooks placed an unconstitutional burden on the parents' right to direct the religious upbringing of their children.



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Case Background

In November 2022, the Montgomery County Board of Education in Maryland approved a series of LGBTQ+ inclusive children's books as supplemental curriculum for its English Language Arts program for students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. One book, *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*, tells the story of a little girl's reaction to her uncle's same-sex wedding; another book, *Pride Puppy*, describes a puppy that becomes lost during a Pride parade.

Initially, the school district permitted parents to be notified and to opt their children out of the classroom during these specific readings. However, citing administrative burdens and an educational obligation toward equity, the Board rescinded the opt-out policy for the subsequent school year, establishing a strict "no-opt-out" rule without advance parental notice.

A multi-faith coalition of parents (including Muslim, Christian, and Ukrainian Orthodox families), led by parent Tamer Mahmoud, filed suit against Superintendent Thomas Taylor. They argued that the school board's refusal to let them excuse their children from such instruction violated their First Amendment rights in two ways: It robbed them of their ability to instruct their children on issues of gender and sexuality according to their faiths and burdened their right to control how and when their children are exposed to these issues.

The lower courts rejected the parents' request for a temporary order that would require the school board, while the litigation continued, to notify the parents when the storybooks would be used and allow them to excuse their children from instruction. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled that on the "threadbare" facts before it, the parents had not shown that exposing the children to the storybooks compelled the parents to violate their religion.

SCOTUS' Majority Opinion

Writing for the majority, Justice Samuel Alito acknowledged that "courts are not school boards or legislatures and are ill-equipped to determine the 'necessity' of discrete aspects of a state's program of compulsory education." But he emphasized that "what the parents seek here is not the right to micromanage the public-school curriculum, but rather to have their children opt out of a particular educational requirement that burdens their well-established right 'to direct 'the religious upbringing' of their children'" under the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.

The majority relied heavily on *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), which recognized that the state cannot enforce educational mandates that pose an objective danger to or "substantially

interfere with" the religious development of children. In *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, the Court ruled for Amish parents challenging a Wisconsin law that required children to attend school until the age of 16.

Here, the Court rejected the school board's framing that the readings were passive exposure to diverse viewpoints. The school board, Alito wrote, "requires teachers to instruct young children using storybooks that explicitly contradict their parents' religious views, and it encourages the teachers to correct the children and accuse them of being 'hurtful' when they express a degree of religious confusion."

The majority observed that the books carried highly normative, ideological messaging intended to shape young children's values, creating a distinct psychological "pressure to conform" that ran directly counter to the parents' religious instruction. Because the no-opt-out policy directly burdened a fundamental religious right, it triggered strict scrutiny. The Court determined that while fostering an inclusive school environment is a valid goal, the wholesale denial of an opt-out mechanism was not "narrowly tailored" to achieve it.

Although the school board may generally have a compelling interest, as it argues, in maintaining a safe and non-disruptive learning environment, Alito acknowledged, the board's argument is weakened by the opt-outs that it allows in other scenarios – for example, from sex education. "This robust 'system of exceptions'" also "undermines the Board's contention that the provision of opt outs to religious parents would be infeasible or unworkable," Alito wrote.

The Dissent

Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented, in an opinion joined by Justices Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson. Sotomayor warned that this decision "threatens the very essence of a public education" because it "strikes at the core premise of public schools: that children may come together to learn not the teachings of a particular faith, but a range of concepts and views that reflect our entire society."

The Aftermath

Justice Alito indicated that going forward and until the litigation in this case is finally resolved, “the Board should be ordered to notify” the parents “whenever one of the books in question or any other similar book is to be used in any way and to allow them to have their children excused from that instruction.”



Mari K. Rockenstein
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VACCINATION LAWS AND REGULATIONS – WHAT’S NEW?

By Carol Mack

In the January 2026 issue of *CITATIONS*, Mari K. Rockenstein reported on a Ventura County family’s challenge to California’s school vaccination requirements after their son was barred from attending Foothill Technology High School. The challenge, based on religious objections to vaccination, reached the United States Supreme Court, which declined to intervene, leaving California’s vaccination requirements in place.

Since then, the national conversation surrounding childhood vaccination has continued to evolve. Recent changes to federal vaccine recommendations have raised new questions about what those changes mean for California schools, and whether California’s requirements will change with them. The short answer, at least for now, is *no*.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently changed its recommendations for childhood vaccines, reducing the number from 17 to 11 and designating some of the eliminated vaccines for high-risk individuals only.

The California Department of Public Health has refused to comply with the new recommendations and maintains that the currently required vaccinations, which are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, are safe and effective. They point to vaccine requirements as the reason California has not been subject to the huge outbreaks of measles occurring in other parts of the country. In fact, the first measles case in 9 years was recently reported in Ventura County.

Attitudes Toward Vaccination

The change in CDC recommendations reflects a shift in the public attitude towards vaccination. More and more people are questioning the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Nationwide, the number of children entering kindergarten without the required vaccinations is at an all-time high.

The Harvard School of Public Health has identified, as drivers for this change, social media, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the influence

of authority figures questioning the safety of vaccination. Republicans express less confidence in vaccines than do Democrats. For the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine, one-third of adults report hearing the false claim that the vaccine is more dangerous than the measles infection. In part, this claim is related to a discredited study from almost 30 years ago.

In 1998, an article by Dr. Andrew Wakefield and colleagues was published in the British medical journal *The Lancet*. The report purported to show that autism was caused by the MMR vaccine commonly given to young children. The case series cited used a remarkably small sample of twelve children and an uncontrolled design but received widespread publicity. Almost immediately, the findings were discredited by epidemiological studies. The authors later retracted the paper’s interpretation, and *The Lancet* fully retracted the article in 2010 after the UK General Medical Council found that Wakefield had acted dishonestly and committed serious ethical violations in conducting and reporting the research. Subsequent investigation concluded that Wakefield had falsified or misrepresented patient information, and he ultimately lost his right to practice medicine. Nevertheless, the belief that vaccines cause autism has persisted and has been fed by a number of public figures, including some in health care, and some parent groups.

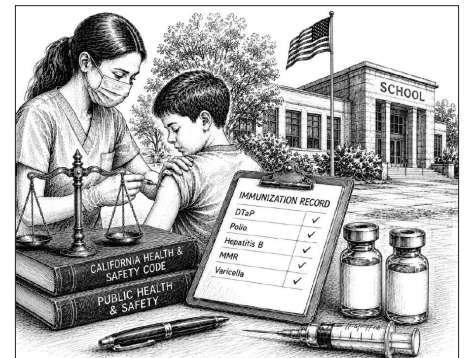
California Vaccination Requirements for Public School Attendance

California requires that all children attending public or private school or childcare facilities be immunized against polio, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTaP), hepatitis B, MMR, and varicella (chickenpox) on a recommended schedule. In the past, parents could opt out of these requirements if they cited religious or personal beliefs or a medical reason for not vaccinating.

In 2015, after a large measles outbreak centered in Disneyland, the law was strengthened. There is no longer an exemption for religious or personal beliefs; only medical exemptions are allowed. As

has previously been reported (*CITATIONS*, January 2026), courts did not uphold a Ventura family’s religious challenge to the requirements. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to review this recent case, but in 1905, the Court did rule in *Jacobson v. Massachusetts* that states have the authority to compel vaccination to protect the public health and safety, citing the police power reserved to the states.

In California, then, except for medical exemptions, all children attending public school must be vaccinated. Children who are not vaccinated may not attend classes but may be homeschooled or attend an independent study program with no classroom instruction. One reason for this strict requirement is that it is essential for herd immunity.



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Herd immunity is defined as the point at which enough people in the population have immunity to a disease that it no longer spreads easily. Herd immunity protects infants and others who cannot be vaccinated. For highly infectious diseases such as measles, herd immunity depends on 95% of the population being immune, either from prior infection or from vaccination.

Since the change in the law, California has seen an increase in vaccination rates. Measles vaccination rates in California now range between 95.1% and 97.3%, up from a low of 92.3%. In Ventura County, the current rate is 96.4%. Meanwhile, due to increasing rates of exemption, the vaccination rate nationwide has declined below the threshold needed for herd immunity.

Additional Vaccination Requirements

In addition to schoolchildren, healthcare workers may also be required to vaccinate against certain diseases. There are no current state requirements for vaccination, but individual facilities may mandate immunizations for their employees.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ventura County healthcare workers were required to be vaccinated against the virus, but that mandate has ended, with vaccination now recommended but not mandated. The law does require healthcare facilities to offer the following vaccinations to their staff at no cost: hepatitis B, influenza, MMR, tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis, and varicella.

At present, the only required vaccine for healthcare personnel in Ventura County is influenza. Healthcare workers are required to be vaccinated or to wear a mask throughout the flu season (November 1st through March 31st). Both religious and medical exemptions are allowed.

In summary, California has some of the strictest regulations for vaccinations for schoolchildren. As a result, herd immunity protects those unable to be vaccinated against some of the most virulent diseases. On the other hand, vaccine requirements for healthcare workers are less stringent. Thus, our schoolchildren may be more protected than hospital patients.



Carol Mack is a member of the CITATIONS editorial board, a registered nurse, retired attorney, and holds a PhD in nursing from UCLA. Her nursing practice

was exclusively in the field of oncology nursing, and although she has not been at the bedside for a number of years, she believes in the truism "once a nurse, always a nurse," and maintains an active license. Mack was formerly a volunteer attorney for Grey Law of Ventura County and now serves on its Board of Directors. She is also a retired health science professor at California State University, Channel Islands.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS:

RICHARD BREDLAU AND STEPHANIE JOHNSON

By Kathleen Maheu, Esq.



Richard R. Bredlau has been a member of the Ventura County Bar Association, and the California Bar, since 1981. A 1977 UCLA graduate, he earned his law degree from Pepperdine University School of Law in 1981. Today, he practices with the Law Offices of Richard R. Bredlau, P.C., focusing primarily on serious and catastrophic personal injury and wrongful death cases in state and federal courts. Earlier in his career, Bredlau practiced business and real estate transactional and litigation work with Nordman, Cormany, Hair and Compton, followed by medical malpractice work with Heily and Blasé and then Worley and Bredlau. He is a member of ABOTA's California Coast Chapter and the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, and is a current board member and two-time past president of the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association.

Bredlau says he wanted to be a lawyer from the time he was a small child. "I was always argumentative, competitive and liked to battle over ideas," he says. Four years of high-school debate reinforced the idea. What keeps him at it today is collaborating with other attorneys on cases, trials and negotiations, solving problems, helping injured people and, as he puts it, "taking money from insurance companies."

A West Covina native who now lives at the beach in Ventura, Bredlau has been married

to his high-school sweetheart since 1981. "I like to say she waited until I passed the bar to marry me," he says. "She denies it." Asked what he prizes most, his answer is simply: "My marriage."

Away from the office, Bredlau surfs, skis, rides dirt bikes, mountain bikes and horses, works on cars and motorcycles, and travels, particularly to the Sierras. He and his wife ride horses about once a week and have three at Canada Larga Ranch: Ciela, a Warlander mare; Eli, a 25-year-old Mustang gelding; and a retired palomino quarter horse. At home are Rocket, a Mini Australian Shepherd, and Mondo, an Australian Shepherd.

Then there is softball. Bredlau has played on the same team for 40 years, competing in at least three leagues a year. The team began with an all-lawyer roster that included a current judge. These days, Bredlau and **Bill Grewe** of Rose Klein & Marias are the remaining lawyers, supplemented, Bredlau readily admits, by "whatever ringers we can load the team up with."

A few more things about Richard Bredlau:

Favorite Ventura County locale: Surfers Point at California Street

Favorite restaurant: Lure in Ventura

Favorite food: Ice cream

Favorite way to relax: Poker

Favorite vacation spot: June Lake, CA

Favorite sport to watch: Dodger baseball

Favorite car: The 1991 Acura NSX he used to own

Favorite book: *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman

Favorite movies: *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* and *Pulp Fiction*

Favorite written law: California Evidence Code section 352

If Bredlau could interview one historical figure, he would choose Abraham Lincoln. His first question to the famous U.S. President and trial lawyer: **"What was your mental process when every option was bad?"**

And his favorite quote is Theodore Roosevelt's famous passage about "the man who is actually in the arena," the one who strives, errs, comes up short and keeps striving rather than standing safely on the sidelines. Given Bredlau's description of a

life spent arguing, competing, trying cases, surfing, racing around on dirt bikes and playing four decades of softball, it seems a particularly fitting choice.

Stephanie Johnson has been a member of the VCBA since 2019 and the California Bar since 2014. A graduate of UC Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara College of Law, Johnson practices with Dudensing Law, where she focuses on elder abuse, neglect and violations of resident rights. She serves on the VCBA Board and is a past president of the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association, where she has held leadership positions since 2018. Early in her career, she also volunteered with the Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara.

For Johnson, the reason for becoming a lawyer was simple: "To help people." She says she always knew she was a helper, and "the law provides so many ways to help." Her answer when asked what she would be doing if she weren't practicing law follows the same theme: nonprofit or social work of some kind.

Originally from Fargo, North Dakota, Johnson grew up in Elk Grove and now lives in Santa Barbara. The Midwest hasn't entirely left her. Her accent, she says, occasionally makes an appearance, particularly when she says "Code of Civil Procedure." [Author's note, I bet you're repeating that phrase in your head and imagining it said with a midwestern accent!] Her culinary preferences have also survived the move west: favorite food is "meat and potatoes; you can take the girl out of the Midwest...."

Johnson was a competitive gymnast until high school, an experience she credits with teaching her the importance of a good work ethic. These days, relaxation is more likely to mean the beach, travel or concerts. She is particularly close to her parents, brother and sister, and says she and her siblings do everything together, especially going to concerts.



Ryan Johnson (brother), Stephanie Johnson, and sister Andrea Johnson (office manager and paralegal at Maho and Prentice, a plaintiff's PI firm in Santa Barbara)

But the answer to what Johnson prizes most requires no deliberation: Dexter, her 16-year-old Yorkie Terrier.

A few more things about Stephanie Johnson:

Favorite vacation spot: The beach
Favorite food: Meat and potatoes

Favorite sport to watch: Football
Favorite movie: *Jurassic Park*
Favorite film series: *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*, including *The Hobbit* series
Favorite written law: The Elder Abuse Act
Favorite ways to relax: Beach, concerts and travel

Between a career devoted to helping others, years of competitive gymnastics, a lingering *Fargo* accent and a 16-year-old Yorkie who outranks everyone and everything in the prized-possession department, Johnson brings a decidedly personal mix to the Ventura County legal community. And when things get difficult? Apparently, the answer is straightforward and serves as her favorite quote, "Just keep swimming."



Kathleen "Kat" Mahieu is an associate attorney practicing family law with Pachowicz | Goldenring, a PLC, and Managing Editor of CITATIONS. She can be reached at kat@pglaw.law.



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