

## NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION'S 2020 STATEWIDE HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL TOURNAMENT CANCELLED

On Friday, March 13, Hank Greenberg, the President of the New York State Bar Association (“NYSBA”), canceled the 2020 Statewide High School Mock Trial Tournament. This decision is based on the public health threat presented by COVID-19; NYSBA’s inability to ensure that the conduct of the Tournament did not contribute to the pandemic’s spread, especially to students; and the impracticality of hosting the Tournament at any time during this school year given ongoing decisions by other entities.

We have all witnessed how COVID-19, otherwise known as the Coronavirus, has impacted the world and our nation. The virus has caused many entities to curtail business activity and taxed our healthcare system. In New York, the virus has caused schools to close, courthouses to restrict non-court-related activities and forced the cancellation of many cultural and recreational events. Over 400 schools in more than 30 counties around the State participate in the New York State Bar Association’s Statewide High School Mock Trial Tournament, as well hundreds of teacher-coaches, attorney-advisors, judges, and spectators. Many of these counties have been dealing with school closings, travel restrictions, and cancellation of after school programs. In addition, many courts around the State, including local, county, state and federal courts, have begun to restrict or deny access to outside groups, including the mock trial teams. Law schools and other venues, typically used by mock trial teams, are also either closed or restricting access.

Because this has become a serious public health issue, the New York State Bar Association has made the decision to cancel the 2020 Mock Trial Tournament. We know how much hard work all the teams, their teacher-coaches and the attorney-advisors have dedicated to preparing and competing, and how disappointing this news must be. We would also like to thank all the judges and court staff who are an integral part of our mock trial program for their continued support.

This decision was a difficult one, but the safety of the students, teachers, attorneys and judges, and others who participate in this Statewide competition must be our priority. Please know NYSBA remains committed to the mock trial program and looks forward to next year’s competition. We appreciate your understanding as we go through this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Henry M. Greenberg, Esq.

Cc: Craig R. Bucki, Chair, LYC Committee  
Gail Ehrlich, Vice Chair, LYC Committee  
Oliver C. Young, Chair, Mock Trial Subcommittee, LYC Committee  
Kimberly Francis, Program Manager, LYC Program