
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIP TO ACCOMMODATE STUDENTS OF ALL RELIGIOUS FAITHS.

1 WHEREAS, religious intolerance and discrimination continue
2 to be the root causes of many of the conflicts around the world;
3 and
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5 WHEREAS, the United States of America was founded by those
6 seeking to practice their religion freely, and the American
7 justice system, including all legal professionals involved,
8 should be working to uphold this principle; and
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10 WHEREAS, the National High School Mock Trial Championship
11 has been, until this date, a prestigious event that requires a
12 tremendous amount of preparation, skill, and dedication on
13 behalf of those students who are competing, and is looked upon
14 with distinction by institutions of higher learning; and
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16 WHEREAS, the National High School Mock Trial Championship
17 is a program based on constitutional law; and
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19 WHEREAS, the National High School Mock Trial Championship
20 espouses the goals of heightening "appreciation of the principle
21 of equal justice for all" and promoting the "exchange of ideas
22 among students from throughout the United States"; and
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24 WHEREAS, the Torah Academy of Bergen County of Teaneck, New
25 Jersey, won the 2005 New Jersey State Bar Foundation High School
26 tournament, and was eligible to compete in the National High
27 School Mock Trial Championship; and
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29 WHEREAS, the members of the mock trial team from Torah
30 Academy observe the Sabbath, in accordance with their practice
31 of Orthodox Judaism, and would not have been able to participate
32 in any National High School Mock Trial Championship competitions
33 from sundown on Friday through sundown on Saturday without
34 certain accommodations; and



1
2 WHEREAS, satisfactory accommodations were made to allow
3 Torah Academy of Teaneck, New Jersey, to compete during the last
4 National High School Mock Trial Championship held in Charlotte,
5 North Carolina, from May 5-7, 2005, without violating the
6 religious practices of the students; and
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8 WHEREAS, a review of the post-host report compiled after
9 the 2005 Championship showed a majority of the comments
10 supported the accommodations made for the Torah Academy students
11 and the benefit of competing with the Torah Academy students;
12 and
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14 WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the National High School
15 Mock Trial Championship voted on October 15, 2005, to refuse any
16 future accommodations for students who observe Sabbath on Friday
17 and/or Saturday; and
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19 WHEREAS, students who have otherwise met all of the
20 criteria to participate in the qualifying competitions leading
21 to the National High School Mock Trial Championship should be
22 able to compete regardless of their religious affiliation; and
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24 WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the New Jersey State Bar
25 Foundation unanimously voted at its October 27, 2005, meeting
26 that New Jersey will not compete in the National High School
27 Mock Trial Championship unless the National Board establishes a
28 policy permitting accommodation for religious observance; and
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30 WHEREAS, on January 6, 2006, the North Carolina Academy of
31 Trial Lawyers also officially withdrew from participating in the
32 National High School Mock Trial Championship because the
33 National Board would not make changes to the competition's
34 schedule to accommodate students with religious restrictions;
35 and
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37 WHEREAS, the decision of the Board of Directors of the
38 National High School Mock Trial Championship to refuse any
39 future accommodations for students who observe their Sabbath on
40 Friday and/or Saturday adversely and wrongly impacts observant
41 Jewish, Muslim, and Seventh-Day Adventist students; and
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43 WHEREAS, the decision made by the Board of Directors of the
44 National High School Mock Trial Championship is inconsistent



1 with American principles of religious freedom and equal
2 protection; now, therefore,
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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
5 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
6 Session of 2008, that this body urges the Board of Directors of
7 the National High School Mock Trial Championship to accommodate
8 the religious beliefs of students participating in the
9 competition; and;
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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the
12 National High School Mock Trial Championship is urged to
13 restructure the rules of the competition to allow qualifying
14 students of all faiths to compete fully in this national
15 championship without having to violate their religious beliefs;
16 and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
20 Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship.
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OFFERED BY:

John M. P. P. P.
Maunaloa, Hawaii

JAN 17 2008

