



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15th Annual San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition Focuses on 5th Amendment

Self-Incrimination and Social Media Influencer Incitement Issues Argued in Court

February 18, 2021 – An imaginary case involving statements made to police, whether a social media influencer incited someone to violence and illegally obtained documents has drawn hundreds of local high school students into the 15th Annual San Diego County High School Mock Trial Competition.

The annual event is hosted by the San Diego Superior Court and supported by the San Diego County Bar Association, U.S. District Court Southern District of California, San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego City Attorney's Office, San Diego County District Attorney's Office, San Diego County Public Defender's Office, Federal Defenders, Inc., U.S. Attorney's Office, and San Diego Paralegal Association. Mock Trial is a program that gives students hands-on experience in learning about the law and the Constitution. This year's pretrial issue involves the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination. Students argue the question of whether a police officer's offer for a ride to the station for the defendant was voluntary and whether or not the statements made while in the police vehicle without a lawyer present can be allowed in trial.

Nearly 600 San Diego County high school students are participating in the event, which went virtual this year, similar to many real-life current court proceedings. Students from 25 San Diego County high schools have fielded 28 teams during the competition. The first four rounds of trials were held earlier in January and February while the semi-final and awards ceremony are scheduled for Saturday, February 20. The championship round is to be held on Wednesday, February 24. The local winner will advance to and represent San Diego County in the Statewide Mock Trial Competition next month.

The Mock Trial competition places high school students in realistic virtual courtroom settings before actual state and federal judges. In those courtrooms, the students assume the roles of lawyers, witnesses, clerks, and bailiffs facing off on a hypothetical case.

The annual Mock Trial Competition is a premier civic education and legal event. State and federal judges volunteer their time during the trials and attorneys from different practice areas throughout the County spend many hours coaching the high school students and/or serving as scorers during the competition.

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Although the mock trials are not open to the general public, school teachers and students wishing to learn more about the program may request to view the livestream of the semifinal, awards ceremony and championship rounds of the competition by emailing sdmocktrial@gmail.com.

UPCOMING MOCK TRIAL EVENTS:

- **Semifinal Round - Saturday, February 20, 9:00 a.m.**
 - Two simultaneous trials with the top four teams
- **Awards Ceremony - Saturday, February 20, 1:00 p.m.**
 - All students, teachers and coaches; awards for best individual performances and announcement of championship round teams
- **Championship Round - Wednesday, February 24, 5:30 p.m.**
 - Top two teams; winner will go to the statewide Mock Trial competition

For more information on the 2021 San Diego County High School Mock Trial competition, please visit sdmocktrial.org. For more information on the San Diego Superior Court, please visit sdcourt.ca.gov.

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