



*Partnering with Teachers to
Bring Citizenship to Life*

**News Release
For Immediate Release**

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Local Students Head to Court, Tackle First Amendment Issue in Mock Trial Competition

CITY (Jan. **X**, 2017) - More than 3,000 high school students will enter courtrooms across the state on **Friday, January 20**, to take part in the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education's (OCLRE) 34th Annual Ohio Mock Trial Competition.

In the 2017 Ohio Mock Trial case, *Pat Justice v. CAT News et al.*, students will consider a case of defamation of a public official by a news station. In the fictitious case, Governor Pat Justice speaks at a school assembly. Afterward, he meets with the school principal, and an argument ensues. Governor Justice leaves abruptly, and the principal is found dead from a brain aneurysm. A student who overheard the argument reports to a local news outlet that Governor Justice killed the principal. While the student's account is quickly disproven, the story goes viral. The governor loses a bid for re-election and files civil suit against the news station, alleging defamation.

Each Ohio Mock Trial team consists of five to eleven students who assume the roles of witnesses and attorneys to present both sides of an original case based on a constitutional issue. Each team will compete in two trials against opposing teams.

ADD QUOTE FROM TEACHER/STUDENT/LOCAL VOLUNTEER RE: STUDENT EXPERIENCE, BENEFITS OF PROGRAM, ETC.

Ohio Mock Trial District Competitions will be hosted in 27 counties throughout Ohio and more than 1,000 legal professionals will serve as volunteer judges, competition coordinators and team advisors. Ohio Mock Trial is Ohio's largest high school academic competition and among the largest high school mock trial programs in the nation.

Teams that advance from the District Competition will compete in the Regional Competition on February 10. Regional winners will compete in the State Competition on March 9-11 in Columbus. The 2017 State Champion will represent Ohio at the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Hartford, Connecticut, May 11-13.

OCLRE is a private non-profit, nonpartisan organization whose goal is to improve society by developing citizens empowered with an understanding of our democratic system. OCLRE is sponsored by the Supreme Court of Ohio, Ohio Attorney General, Ohio State Bar Association and the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio Foundation. The Ohio Mock Trial program is funded in part by a grant from the Ohio State Bar Foundation.

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Note to editors:

Counties hosting Ohio Mock Trial district competitions:

Butler, Clermont, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Franklin, Hamilton, Huron, Hancock, Hocking, Lake, Licking, Lorain, Lucas, Marion, Medina, Montgomery, Pickaway, Richland, Scioto, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Union, Washington, Wood