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Dialogues on Freedom Asks High School Students to Debate the Balance of Individual Freedom and Security with Judges, Attorneys and Law School Students

LOS ANGELES – March 13, 2019 – California Supreme Court Associate Justice Joshua Groban and Federal Public Defender Hilary Potashner are among the 150 judges, attorneys and law school students who will visit Southern California classrooms on Thursday, March 14, and Friday, March 15, 2019, as part of the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s (LACBA) 18th Annual Dialogues on Freedom.

The program, which is a collaborative effort with LACBA, Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles Superior Court and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), was founded in 2002 by then U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy in response to the 9/11 attacks, and asks students whether teachers, principals, city officials or police have the right and/or obligation to intervene in situations students view as an infringement on their individual freedom.

“Ripped from the headlines, this year’s Dialogues Program provides students with an important opportunity to think critically about balancing a school’s need to provide a safe and orderly learning environment while also respecting its students’ Constitutional rights to be free from unreasonable searches, questioning and restrictions on the freedom of expression,” said Hon. Kevin Rosenberg, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge and co-chair of the Dialogues on Freedom Committee.

“The Constitutional Rights Foundation is thrilled to partner with LACBA, the Los Angeles Superior Court and LAUSD on the Dialogues on Freedom program,” said Constitutional Rights Foundation President Marshall Croddy. “It’s imperative that we provide opportunities for young people to grapple with important issues facing our democracy. Dialogues on Freedom provides a vehicle for young people to share their opinions and interact with respected members of our legal community.”

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“Participating in the Dialogues on Freedom program is an honor for our Court and our judicial officers,” said Los Angeles Superior Court Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile. “Understanding the Constitution, its amendments and its impact on our daily lives and freedoms will assist our community, our judicial system and our future generations to fully appreciate these rights and responsibilities.”

Volunteers utilize topics on free speech, the right to privacy, and others to ask whether teachers, principals, city officials or police have the right and/or obligation to intervene in students’ activities. This year’s prompts ask:

- Do school officials have the right to restrict students from kneeling, sitting or conducting any other form of political protest during the National Anthem?
- Should a student be arrested for selling prescription drugs based on a confession he made to a teacher which was overheard by a deputy sheriff?
- Did school officials have the right to alert police to an after prom party at a local hotel where students were arrested for underage drinking?
- Should students be required to download a “Student Attendance App” that allows school staff to track the location of students on and off campus?
- Should a student have been suspended for yelling what some would call a “slur” during a Glee Club performance, but what he claims is a saying all the kids use when a performance is poor?

High schools participating in this year’s Dialogues on Freedom include: Abraham Lincoln High School, Burbank High School, Los Angeles County Probation Camp Paige, Dorsey High School, Eagle Rock High School, Franklin High School, HAAT @ Esteban Torres High School, Highland High School, Humanitas Academy of Art and Technology, Los Angeles County Probation Camp Kirby Center, Lincoln High School, Los Angeles High School, Magnolia Science Academy #4, Maywood Center for Enriched Studies, Narbonne High School, Phineas Banning High School, San Fernando High School and Woodrow Wilson High Law Magnet.

To learn more, visit www.lacba.org/dialogues.

About the Constitutional Rights Foundation

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization. CRF provides programs and curriculum materials to K-12 schools in Los Angeles and throughout the nation that engage youth in gaining the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of informed and engaged citizens. For more information, visit www.crf-usa.org.

About the Los Angeles County Bar Association

The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) is one of the largest voluntary metropolitan bar associations in the nation and has nearly 20,000 members. LACBA is engaged in advancing the administration of justice and meeting the professional needs of lawyers. For more information on LACBA, visit www.lacba.org.

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