July 1, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht  
Justice Jimmy Blacklock  
Justice Jane Bland  
Justice Jeffrey S. Boyd  
Justice Brett Busby  
Justice John Phillip Devine  
Justice Paul W. Green  
Justice Eva Guzman  
Justice Debra Lehrmann  
Supreme Court of Texas  
201 W. 14th Street  
Austin, TX 78701

Ms. Susan Henricks, Executive Director  
Texas Board of Law Examiners  
205 W 14th Street, Suite #500  
Austin, TX 78701

Mr. Augustin “Augie” Rivera, Jr., Chair  
Texas Board of Law Examiners  
205 W 14th Street, Suite #500  
Austin, TX 78701

Mr. Trey Apffel, Executive Director  
State Bar of Texas, Texas Law Center  
1414 Colorado Street  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chief Justice Hecht, Members of the Supreme Court, Ms. Henricks, Mr. Rivera, and Mr. Apffel:

The Houston Young Lawyers Association (“HYLA”) writes in support of the June 29, 2020 letter from the deans of the ten Texas law schools, asking the Supreme Court, the Texas Board of Law Examiners (“BLE”), and the State Bar of Texas to consider three proposed alternatives to the in-person administrations of the Texas Bar Exam planned for this month and later this year, in light of the growing severity of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like the deans, HYL A appreciates the leadership and flexibility that the Supreme Court and the BLE have shown in implementing significant and unprecedented measures during this ongoing crisis. HYL A also recognizes that none of the three proposed solutions is perfect. Our organization nevertheless strongly supports the creative approaches proposed by the deans as a reasonable balance between the important needs of the public and the serious health risks and other burdens faced by 2020 bar takers—many of whom are HYL A members.
These approaches reflect the flexible measures taken by courts, law firms, and the broader legal community. HYLA too has had to adjust to these difficult times for the health and safety of our members—not having held an in-person event in months and with no plans to do so in the foreseeable future—even though we typically hold more than 80 events a year. Instead, we have moved our programming online, much like the first option proposed by the deans of an online exam.

Recent law graduates already face significant challenges entering the current legal market. In our view, they do not need to face yet another in the form of an in-person exam that could unnecessarily jeopardize their health. We ask that the Supreme Court, the BLE, and the State Bar seriously consider the options set forth in the deans’ letter to assist these potential new members of our noble profession and keep them safe.

Sincerely,

Krisina Zuñiga
President of the Houston Young Lawyers Association

cc: Dean Robert Ahdieh
    Dean Michael F. Barry
    Dean Leonard Baynes
    Dean Joan Bullock
    Dean Jennifer Collins
    Dean Angela Epps
    Dean Ward Farnsworth
    Dean Jack Nowlin
    Dean Patricia Roberts
    Dean Brad Toben