



**Supreme Judicial Court
John Adams Courthouse
One Pemberton Square, Suite 2500
Boston, Massachusetts 02108**

Ralph D. Gants
Chief Justice

March 30, 2020

Dear Bar Leaders and Members of the Bar,

Today, the Supreme Judicial Court and the Board of Bar Examiners announced that the bar examination, currently scheduled for July 28-29, will not be held until the autumn. We also announced that, even if limitations on large gatherings in the autumn were to prevent the traditional administration of the Massachusetts bar examination, we will devise an alternative means to test applicants for Massachusetts bar admission. In short, graduating law students will have an opportunity this autumn, but not this summer, to be admitted to the Bar of Massachusetts.

I know that the postponement of the summer bar examination is yet another disappointment among the many that the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted on graduating law students after the abrupt termination of in-person classes and the cancellation of graduation ceremonies. And I know that the postponement of the bar examination will trigger anxiety and uncertainty as to whether post-graduation job offers will be honored and as to the financial consequence of delaying their bar preparation from June and July to August and September.

I ask Bar leaders and current members of the Bar to do what you can to allay the concerns of these future members of the Bar. If you have made job offers to third year law students, or if your law firm has, please reach out to them to assure them as best you can that your offers will be honored. If you are a Bar leader, please find ways for your Bar Association to reach out to these law students to provide mentoring and guidance during these challenging times. If you are an attorney who knows a third year law student, reach out to offer the perspective that comes with age and experience. And all of us need to think creatively as to how graduating law students can be put to work in the summer before they commence their bar preparation.

I thank you for your support, your resilience, and your ingenuity as we find ways to practice law and accomplish justice in the midst of the worst pandemic in a century. And now I ask you to lend a helping hand to graduating law students who badly need your support, your resilience, and your ingenuity as they navigate what is now a more difficult path to a legal career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ralph D. Gants".

Ralph D. Gants