



Members of the Bar:

As you know, the 2020 Bar Convention was planned for October 28-30, 2020. We had moved the convention from May to October in order to overlap one day with the judicial conference.

On the afternoon of July 20, the Board of Governors met to decide whether to 1) go forward with the convention, in person; or 2) move the convention to an interactive online convention; or 3) cancel the convention altogether. The Board considered several important factors, including that the judiciary cancelled its conference, many voluntary bars and legal organizations cancelled their conferences, and most importantly the rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Alaska. Realizing that we are not equipped to hold a convention safely, the Board voted unanimously to cancel the convention, in its entirety. There will be no speakers, social events, or CLE's. Some may ask whether there will be CLE's offered in the future to make up for those cancelled. The answer is yes, in due time. The CLE Director will be working diligently to cancel the current speakers and then plan for CLE opportunities for members over the remainder of the calendar year.

Two weeks ago, convention fliers were circulated, advertising the convention format. Listed on the flier was an announcement that the Keynote speaker was Professor Alan Dershowitz from Harvard University. Over the past week, members of the Bar reached out, objecting to the invitation extended to Professor Dershowitz. The Board and I received emails, letters, and phone calls from members of the Bar regarding the convention, including from members who supported the invitation. The Board takes members' concerns seriously and is grateful that so many of you shared your comments with us. Nine members of the public, including bar members and a reporter, attended the meeting. About half of those in attendance testified when invited to do so.

The Board, after deciding to cancel the 2020 Convention, and in light of the concerns raised over the invitation to Professor Dershowitz, decided to place on the September 1 & 2 Board of Governors meeting agenda, a discussion of the procedures for presenting an invitation to future Keynote speakers.

Please feel free to contact me at [rob@stonelawalaska.com](mailto:rob@stonelawalaska.com)

Rob Stone

President

Alaska Bar Association