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Law School Deans' and Professors' Statement of Support for Urban Debate

We are Law School deans and professors. We are also former high school or college debaters or those who, through other means, have become familiar with debate as an academic activity.

Based on our own experiences, we believe that high school debate is an excellent training ground for students to develop interests and skills that apply directly to legal thought and practice. Debate cultivates critical thinking, research, analysis, argumentation, and presentation skills. Not surprisingly, debaters are successful law students and lawyers.

We therefore believe that the introduction of debate through Urban Debate Leagues builds a larger pipeline of students who are interested in, and well-prepared for, law school and legal practice. These Leagues, reflecting the populations of the urban districts they serve, overwhelmingly comprise minority students. They, therefore, train a new generation of students, many of whom, if our own experience is any guide, will choose legal careers.

As such, we enthusiastically endorse Urban Debate Leagues as a valuable method by which to diversify the legal pipeline and profession. We agree that increasing that diversity is an important objective. And, we encourage others who are concerned with the diversity of the legal profession to support the NAUDL and efforts to build new Urban Debate Leagues and to expand existing ones.

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