



REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION 2020

Competition Rules:

1. Eligible Students: Current New Mexico high school seniors. To receive the prize, seniors must submit a proof of enrollment letter from their college or university with an anticipated Fall 2020 matriculation.
2. Assessment of Essays: Essays will be evaluated according to six categories: (a) quality, (b) content, (c) persuasiveness, (d) style, (e) organization, and (f) creativity. The maximum number of points each contestant may receive per category is five points for his or her essay, for a maximum total of thirty points for the entire essay.
3. The Essay Question: The speaker must incorporate the topic and/or answer the essay question. It should not be recited verbatim. Failure to incorporate the topic and/or answer the essay question will result in points being deducted.
4. Essay Competition: Attorneys or judges will be chosen to judge the essays and will announce the top three winners at the New Mexico Black Lawyers Association Virtual Spring meeting on **May 29, 2020**. *First place: \$500; Second place: \$350; Third place: \$150.*

Question:

As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, it has become apparent that the disease has a disproportionate effect on people of color, and more specifically, on black Americans. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), in cases where race was known, African-Americans make up 28.5% of those testing positive for COVID-19 in the US, although only 13% of the population. The Associated Press estimates that about 1/3 of US COVID-19 fatalities are African Americans. Some have implied that black people themselves are to blame for this occurrence. For example, in a White House pandemic press briefing on April 10, 2020, U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams stated that in addition to observing social distancing and proper hygiene, communities of color should “avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drugs.” Others have pointed to the high incidence of health problems like obesity, hypertension, and diabetes in black communities as the culprit. Still, others have pointed to structural racism as the problem.

What do you think Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would say if asked why the COVID-19 pandemic has had such a disparate impact on African-Americans and what solution would he propose?

Essay Format:

1. The essay should be no longer than 1000 words.
2. The type font must be Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced.
3. The margins must be 1” and text must be fully justified.
4. The essay should be submitted via e-mail by **May 25, 2020 at 5:00 PM MST** to nmblacklawyers@gmail.com.