



AMISTAD LONG ISLAND BLACK BAR ASSOCIATION

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March 2026

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Dear Applicant:

Welcome to the 2026 Dr. Martin Luther King Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition! The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition is a contest designed to motivate high school students to excel in education. The Competition encourages students to express their views on a pre-selected topic and focuses on the ability of the students to communicate orally and in writing. The contest is also designed to give young people experience in public speaking and reviewing legal documents as well as provide an opportunity for them to obtain some financial support to continue their education.

Who Is Eligible to Participate:

High School Juniors (Class of 2027) and Seniors (Class of 2026) from Amistad's local geographical area.

What is required:

An essay and then a presentation of the essay in an oratory contest. The essay must be submitted with the application form. The essay question, application and competition rules are in the download.

When is it due?

All applications are due to Amistad no later than April 20, 2026. The applications should be emailed to: amistadblackbar@gmail.com

More about the competition:

Throughout the United States, affiliate chapters such as AMISTAD will hold local competitions to identify students who will participate in the Regional Competition to be held on a dated TBA. The first-place winner of the Regional Competition will be eligible to enter the National Competition, which will be held in person during the NBA's 101st Annual Convention & Exhibits in Nashville, Tennessee on Thursday, July 30, 2026.

For the National Competition, a first place, second place, and third place winner will be chosen. The winners will each receive a one-time scholarship in the following amounts: First Place - \$5,000, Second Place - \$3,500, Third Place - \$2,000, and \$500 for the remaining competitors. AMISTAD competitors consistently place in the National Competition, and we are excited to continue the momentum.



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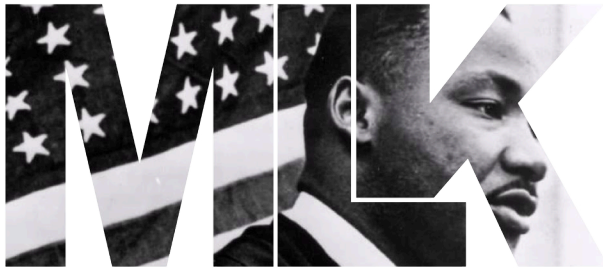
This Year's Competition Question

Former President Donald Trump's immigration policies focused on strict border control, limiting both legal and illegal immigration, and expanding the power of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain and deport undocumented immigrants. Supporters say these actions protect American jobs and national security, while critics argue they create fear, divide families, and conflict with America's values of compassion and equality. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned a "beloved community" — a society grounded in justice, empathy, and respect for human dignity. If Dr. King were alive today, would he agree or disagree with Trump's approach to immigration and the use of ICE? How might his vision of the beloved community guide his response to today's immigration policies and enforcement practices?

Regards,

Joy S. Bunch Wilkinson

Joy S. Bunch Wilkinson, Esq.
Vice-President, ALIBBA



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition

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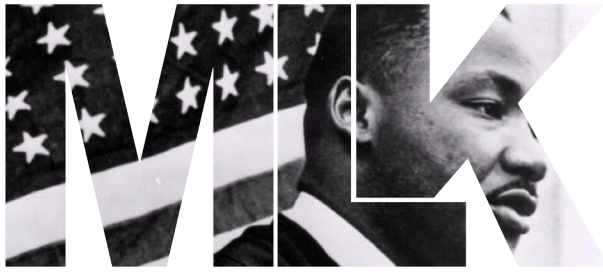
III. COMPETITION RULES

A. Essay Format:

1. The essay should be no longer than 1000 words.
2. The type font must be Arial, 12 point, double-spaced.
3. The margins must be 1" and text must be fully justified.
4. The essay **MUST** be accompanied by a Contestant Cover Sheet Form. (see page 9)
5. The essay may be submitted via e-mail or U.S. mail, but e-mail is preferred.
 - a. If submitted via e-mail, the Contestant must send the essay as an attachment in Word format to the Regional Director via email.
 - b. If submitted by mail, the essay must be typewritten and mailed to the Regional Director.

B. Regional Competition Rules:

1. **Eligible Students:** Current, college-bound, high school juniors and seniors. All students will receive a prize for participating in the National Competition. To receive the prize, seniors must submit a proof of enrollment letter from their college or university within **90 days** after their participation in the National Competition. Juniors will receive their prize when they matriculate for college. Juniors must also submit proof of enrollment letter from their college or university by **September 30, 2027**.
2. **Assessment of Essays and Oral Presentations:** Essays and Oral Presentations 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 and five points for his or her oral presentation, for a maximum total of thirty points for the entire essay and thirty points for the entire oral presentation. Advancing students will be notified via e-mail or U.S. mail. Advancing students **MUST** confirm their participation within 48 hours of receiving notification.
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. **Props:** The speaker is prohibited from using any props. Any use of props will result in points being deducted. The speaker may use notes.
5. **Timing:** The oral presentation must be a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of seven minutes. An oral presentation outside of this timeframe will result in points being deducted.



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6. **Dress:** All Contestants should be dressed in business attire (i.e., suits and ties for the men and suits or dresses for the ladies) for the Regional Competition.
7. All essays submitted become the property of the National Bar Association. They will not be returned. Contestants should retain a copy for his/her records.
8. All NBA Affiliate Chapters and Regions will be responsible for verifying the eligibility of the Contestants. The National Competition Committee will determine questions of Contestant eligibility and **ALL DETERMINATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY BY THIS BODY ARE FINAL.**

IV. 2026 MLK COMPETITION QUESTION

Former President Donald Trump’s immigration policies focused on strict border control, limiting both legal and illegal immigration, and expanding the power of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to detain and deport undocumented immigrants. Supporters say these actions protect American jobs and national security, while critics argue they create fear, divide families, and conflict with America’s values of compassion and equality.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned a “beloved community” — a society grounded in justice, empathy, and respect for human dignity.

If Dr. King were alive today, would he agree or disagree with Trump’s approach to immigration and the use of ICE? How might his vision of the beloved community guide his response to today’s immigration policies and enforcement practices?

RESEARCH GUIDE:

1. <https://www.cfr.org/article/ice-and-deportations-how-trump-reshaping-immigration-enforcement>
2. <https://forumtogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/OBBA-Update-July-2025.pdf>
3. <https://www.aila.org/library/president-trump-signs-executive-order-protecting-the-american-people-against-invasion>
4. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/big-beautiful-bill-immigration-border-security/>
5. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/big-budget-act-creates-deportation-industrial-complex>



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Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition

V. OFFICIAL CONTESTANT’S COVER SHEET, APPLICATION FORM, AND PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

NOTE: All three forms must be included with your essay.

2026 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition
 Contestant Cover Sheet

Applicant’s Background Information Please type or print

	Date:	
		Submit Photo and Essay with your Application

I. Applicant Data

Student’s Name: _____

Permanent Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Cell Phone: () _____ Email: _____

Parent or Guardian’s Name _____

Permanent Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Cell Phone: () _____

Email _____

Student’s High School: _____

Grade Level: _____ Grade Point Average: _____

High School Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



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High School Phone: ()



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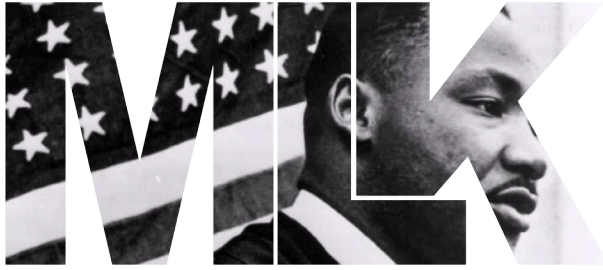
Application

Please answer the below listed questions. A parent or legal guardian must sign your application. If a parent or legal guardian does not sign your application, and time permits, your application will be returned for you to complete. In the event time does not permit the return of an incomplete application, such application may not be considered. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

1.	List academic honors received.
2.	Briefly describe extracurricular activities (school clubs, volunteer organizations, not-for-profit organizations, etc.) you are involved in.
3.	For Seniors: List two-year/four-year College or University you plan to attend. Please include an acceptance letter to this form.

*****NOTE:** Attach your written essay on the official topic selected by the National Bar Association to your Application. The essay must not exceed 1,000 words.

Signature of Applicant		Date
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian		Date



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition

Photography Release Waiver and Release of Liability

I hereby grant permission to the National Bar Association (NBA) and National Bar Institute (NBI), and their agents, employees or assignees, to photograph competitor _____ (Competitor) and use the photograph(s) for informational, educational, promotional, or publicity purposes concerning the promotion of its services and events, including but not limited to the Dr. Martin Luther King Drum Major for Justice Advocacy Competition (Competition).

I understand that the photograph(s) may be used by NBA or NBI on their respective websites, publications or displays, magazines, reports, or other documents; or electronic or digital recordings as well as in press releases concerning the Competition.

I also grant permission to NBA and NBI, their agents, employees or assignees to offer the photograph(s) for use or distribution in other publications, electronic or otherwise, without notifying me or seeking any further consent or authorization from me.

I understand that the NBA and NBI, their agents, employees or assignees, may modify photograph(s) in the process of editing. I hereby grant NBA and NBI, their agents, employees or assignees, permission to select, crop, and reproduce a photograph or photographs at their discretion. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs or printed or electronic matter that may be used in conjunction with them now or in the future. I also understand that neither the Competitor nor I will be entitled to any compensation or royalties for use of the photograph(s).

I also agree to release NBA and NBI, their agents, employees or assignees, from any and all claims, damages or liability arising out of or connected to the use of the photograph(s) as stated above.

I have read and understand this release and waiver of liability, and voluntarily accept and agree to its terms.

Name of Parent or Guardian/Competitor (if over 18)

Signature of Parent or Guardian/Competitor (if over 18)

Date