

**American Bar Association**  
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**JOINT STATEMENT OF ABA LAW STUDENT DIVISION CHAIR TREMAINE "TEDDY" REESE AND YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION CHAIR MICHAEL G. BERGMANN**  
**RE: ABA AND YOUNG LAWYERS, LAW STUDENTS**

CHICAGO, Jan. 31, 2012 —The American Bar Association cares deeply about law students and young lawyers, and is committed to helping you succeed during this challenging time for our profession. Our Law Student and Young Lawyers Divisions—which make up nearly half of the association's membership—are working individually and collaboratively to support you, speak out on your behalf, and provide resources that will ensure your achievement and fulfillment in the legal profession.

Law students and young lawyers face more stress and uncertainty today than ever. Today, the cost of legal education and average student loan debt loads are unprecedented, while job prospects for graduates are uncertain. The ABA and its Law Student and Young Lawyers Divisions understand these realities, and are creating and leading initiatives to assist you during the initial stages of your career.

Tremaine "Teddy" Reese, the 2011-2012 Law Student Division chair who attends Florida A&M University College of Law, said, "Considering the challenges for today's law students, I am encouraged by the leadership, support and resources provided by the ABA. We are arguably attending law school during very challenging economic times. However, this is not the time to give up. With the continued support of many judges and attorneys throughout the ABA, we will continue our push to be movers and shakers in the legal community.

"I speak from my experience as a member that the ABA is in full support of all law students and is committed to developing resources that will assist law students in their job search, and providing access to experienced attorneys. With signs of economic improvement, our job seeking resources and our attendance at vital meetings, I am convinced that ABA law student members will be in a better position as they embark on their careers in the legal profession."

The ABA is working to ensure that you can make an informed decision about your choice in law schools. The Young Lawyers Division sponsored a resolution calling on law schools to report more detailed job employment statistics. This resolution was ultimately adopted by the ABA House of Delegates and became official policy of the ABA. The ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar is changing the way law schools report that information—providing more accurate and clear data about the types of jobs held by recent graduates, whether those jobs require a J.D., and whether they are part- or full-time jobs. The Young Lawyers Division established a Truth in Law School Education Committee to study the section's work and ongoing efforts to increase law school transparency.

We are working to make law school more affordable once you enroll. In August of last year, the House of Delegates approved another resolution sponsored by the Young Lawyers Division that urged Congress to assist students with debt relief. We are pleased to report President Obama signed a law two months later adjusting the deadlines for income-based repayment relief and allowing loans to be consolidated with lower interest rates.

We are also working to provide networking and other resources for career placement and professional development. The Law Student Division offers internships, fellowships and clerkships in a variety of specialties, plus campus programs involving practicing lawyers in your community. The Young Lawyers Division's Career Development Initiative features a different potential career path each month, giving you insight into the field within the legal profession you might consider after graduation or another career transition. Once in practice, you may join any of the ABA's specialty practice groups covering more than 30 areas of law, to network with and learn from peers in your chosen field. Hundreds of continuing legal education courses provide you with the tools to sharpen your skills and stay abreast of the latest trends in the industry.

We are working to give you a voice. The Law Student Division and the Young Lawyers Division have official voting representatives on the ABA Board of Governors, as well as voting delegates in the ABA House of Delegates. Additionally, both divisions have their own governing bodies—the LSD Assembly, which consists of two delegates from each of the 200 ABA-approved law schools; and the YLD Assembly, which consists of young lawyers from young lawyer organizations across the country. In each of these governing bodies, the divisions personally advocate on behalf of the needs and concerns of law students and young lawyers across the country.

According to the 2011-2012 Young Lawyers Division chair, Michael G. Bergmann of Chicago, "My involvement with the ABA, and specifically the Young Lawyers Division, has been extremely rewarding to me both personally and professionally. I have developed a network of lawyers from across the country, have had a voice in addressing issues that impact our profession, have been able to make a difference in the lives of others through public service efforts, and have grown personally and professionally."

The ABA is the largest voluntary association in the world, which means no other organization can match our ability to help you gain knowledge, develop skills, build networks and be heard. We are your partners for a productive and rewarding career in the field of law.

Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III, president of the ABA, said, "Our Law Student and Young Lawyer Divisions are doing an exceptional job with networking, job placement, continuing education and other programs that help those just starting their careers. Working together, we will continue to address the concerns young lawyers and law students have about the job market, debt loads and other issues that they care about."

The ABA Young Lawyers Division is the home for young lawyers who are under the age of 36 or within the first five years of practice. With over 130,000 members and 300 affiliated young lawyer organizations, the ABA YLD is the largest young lawyer organization in the world. The ABA Law Student Division is the largest professional student organization in the country and one of the largest dues paying entities of the Association. All students attending ABA-approved law schools are eligible to join.

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With nearly 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.