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Virtual Courtrooms? a Stopgap or A2J Solution?

Virtual Court Presents Unforeseen Challenges, Opportunities

During a hearing by videoconference, should a lawyer rise for the judge? even if this means that for a moment, only the lawyer's torso will be visible? That's a small issue, certainly. But when taken together, the many small, unanticipated questions and challenges involved with virtual court are adding up to quite a lot. Even the U.S. Supreme Court is taking unprecedented measures in response to COVID-19, announcing last week that it will hear oral arguments by phone. Initial hurdles aside, are there some ways that this crisis-driven introduction to new technologies will be good for the legal profession and for justice overall? [Bloomberg Law](#) takes a fascinating look at a system undergoing profound, rapid change? and speaks with New York State Bar Association President Hank Greenberg, among other thought leaders.

Across the Nation, Legal Aid Braces for IOLTA Hit

In an effort to prevent some of the economic damage that COVID-19 is expected to cause, in March, the Federal Reserve lowered interest rates not once, but twice. There's a problem: Much of the funding for civil legal aid in the United States comes from Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts programs. The benchmark federal funds rate is now at 0.25 percent? the lowest rate possible, and the lowest since after the 2008 recession. All of this is occurring just as civil legal aid attorneys are scrambling to assist low-income clients with a host of issues related to the pandemic. [Law360](#) shares perspectives from legal aid providers, bar foundation executives, and others who receive or administer IOLTA funding.

Advocacy from a Safe Distance: First-Ever ABA Day Digital Is April 22-23

Even though it's not possible to meet in person now, the need for legislative advocacy has not ended. On April 22 and 23, the ABA is conducting [ABA Day Digital](#), the bar's first-ever fully digital lobbying event. Traditionally, ABA Day in Washington draws hundreds of lawyers to Capitol Hill to meet with their Congress members; the ABA Governmental Affairs Office hopes that thousands will participate in the digital event, via email, phone, and social media. What are the four advocacy issues that the ABA Day Planning Committee has selected, and how can lawyers, legal professionals, and bar staff members participate? Find out at [ABA Journal](#).

New York State Bar Association, State Bar of Michigan Offer Pandemic-Related Pro Bono Help

To help people who have lost jobs because of the COVID-19 crisis, New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has called on the pro bono network that was recently formed by the New York state court system and the New York State Bar Association. In the future, this network will also focus on other issues that arise from the pandemic, according to a [NYSBA news item](#). Meanwhile, the State Bar of Michigan announced a new initiative called the Frontline Responders Legal Helpline, in which pro bono lawyers will help medical workers and first responders (of any income level) with wills, medical powers of attorney, financial powers of attorney, and other important documents. [Fox 17 West Michigan](#) has more details.



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