

To Our Law School Communities,

We sign this letter today to pledge to improve the mental health of our campuses. Improving wellness and advancing legal education are synchronized interests; by promoting one, we promote the other. Addressing mental health issues today within our communities will not only make us happier and healthier individuals, but also better students and members of the legal profession.

Popular culture reinforces damaging law school stereotypes: that law school must be a grueling and overwhelming ordeal to adequately prepare students for legal practice. The toll on students' mental health has become an accepted characteristic of law school life rather than properly recognized as an impediment to our success. Indeed, our laws and judicial decisions display a history of overlooking mental and emotional distress and continue to downplay mental illness as too enigmatic, unimportant or easily faked to have a role in the law. Moreover, law school culture as well as character and fitness inquiries into mental health treatment history can encourage self-medication in the form of alcohol consumption and substance abuse, rather than healthy long-term treatment. We must be vigilant to stop the internalization of these misguided mental health norms in our law schools.

We say to our affected peers: you are not alone. We say to all our friends and colleagues: we can do better. Poor student or practitioner health is not a necessary byproduct of a rigorous legal education and needs to be treated as the scourge of the profession that it is. Students left behind are not failures of personal strength. They are testaments to our collective failure to uplift one another and raise the standards of our trade.

Student advocates and school administrators across the country are committing themselves to studying and addressing mental health struggles in their communities. We commend these efforts and support all law students and schools in sticking up for mental health, and we encourage our peers to do the same. Today, we pledge to broaden these efforts and join with other organizations on our campuses that strive to provide better access to care and root out the stigma in a field that often penalizes individuals for seeking help. We commit to fight for a better mental health environment in the legal education community.

Sincerely,



Cornell Law Students Association
President Daniel Sperling



Harvard Law School Student Government
Presidents Adrian Perkins & Amanda Lee



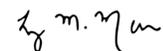
Texas Law Student Bar Association
President Clara Chalk



University of Pennsylvania Law School
Council of Student Representatives
President Chris O'Brien



Columbia Law School Student Senate
President Ramsey Fisher



Northwestern Pritzker School of Law
SBA President Melissa Moreno



Duke University School of Law Bar Association
President Alix Simnock



Stanford Law Association
Presidents Nick DeFiesta & Alexandria Gilbert



University of Michigan Law School Student Senate
President Kristin Froehle



Yale Law School Student Representatives
Chair Shane Kunselman



University of Chicago Law Students Association
President Sean Planchard



NYU School of Law
President George Harris

University of California, Berkeley: School of Law
Co-Presidents Katie Lee and Travis Mitchell