



NAME OF EVENT: Pandemic at the Courthouse Doors

(This event has been approved for 1 hour of California MCLE credit.)

DATE | TIME | LOCATION: April 7, 2020 | 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. ET | Briefing Call

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: As public health experts predict that current social distancing measures may need to be in place weeks or months longer than originally anticipated, federal and state criminal and civil courts must grapple with what that means for judges, parties coming before courts, jurors, and court personnel. Yet, a recent [survey](#) of judges found that nearly sixty percent do not feel adequately prepared to make decisions about how to manage their dockets and protect parties' rights in the face of the coronavirus outbreak.

Many courts have closed or suspended in-person business for the time being to minimize exposure. The suspension of jury trials, legal deadlines, and statutes of limitations, however, could prove harmful to parties in criminal and civil cases seeking to vindicate their rights and, more worrisome, potentially fatal to criminal defendants forced to remain in overcrowded, unsanitary pretrial detention facilities, like Rikers Island, which has already [reported](#) COVID-19 cases.

Can courts balance their role as protectors of the rule of law with the public health measures necessary to quell a pandemic?

SPEAKERS' NAMES AND BIOS:

[Elaine Poon](#), Managing Attorney, Legal Aid Justice Center

[Jonathan Smith](#), Executive Director, Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Christopher Wright Durocher, Senior Director of Policy and Program, ACS, Moderator

AGENDA OF CONFERENCE CALL:

5 minutes introduction

30 minutes speakers' presentations

20 minutes Q&A

5 minutes conclusion

MATERIALS FOR CALL:

[COVID-19 Correctional Facility Emergency Response Act of 2020](#), H.R. 6414, 116th Cong. (2020).

[Emergency Community Supervision Act](#), S. 3579, 116th Cong. (2020).

In the Matter of the Request to Commute or Suspend County Jail Sentences, Docket No. 084230, [Consent Order](#) (N.J. Sup. Ct. Mar. 22, 2020).

[Tracking Prisons' Response to Coronavirus](#), THE MARSHALL PROJECT (Mar. 25, 2020, 2:03 PM).

[Coronavirus and Courts State Profiles](#), NAT'L CTR. FOR ST. CTS. (last updated Mar. 31, 2020).

[Interim Guidance on Management of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#), U.S. CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (last updated Mar. 23, 2020).

Sarah Jarvis, [Coronavirus: The Latest Court Closures and Restrictions](#), LAW360 (Mar. 30, 2020).

Willoughby Mariano, [USA's Top Law Group Hopes to Limit Legal Harm to the Poor](#), ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION (Mar. 16, 2020)

Angela Morris, [As COVID-19 Layoffs Increase Demand for Legal Aid, Providers Expect Precipitous Funding Drop](#), LAW.COM (Mar. 25, 2020)

Harper Neidig, [Advocates Warn of Coronavirus Threat to Inmates](#), THE HILL (Mar. 22, 2020)

Will Parker, [Coronavirus Outbreak Pushes Local Governments to Freeze Home Evictions](#), WALL ST. J. (Mar. 22, 2020).

Adele Peters, [People Are Starting to Declare Bankruptcy from Coronavirus — But It's Often Impossible to Do While Distancing](#), FAST COMPANY (Mar. 26, 2020).

Todd Ruger, [Coronavirus Could Overwhelm Legal Help for America's Poor](#), ROLL CALL (Mar. 31, 2020).

Mark Joseph Stern, [Washington Supreme Court Orders Judges to Keep People Out of Jail](#), SLATE (Mar. 23, 2020).