

Second Annual American Mock Trial Invitational a Success

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Rothman Addresses Over 100 High School Participants at the Second Annual American Mock Trial Invitational

(New Brunswick, NJ)—On Friday, May 4th, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) spoke about the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in our country at the 2nd Annual American Mock Trial Invitational (AMTI) at the New Jersey Law Center at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. The New Jersey State Bar Foundation and the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers established the AMTI in May 2006 to permit high school state mock trial champions with weekend religious obligations to compete in a national forum.

They created AMTI after the Board of Directors of the National High School Mock Trial Championship ignored repeated calls to allow students to compete without violating their religious practices. In 2005, the Board of the other championship accommodated students from the Torah Academy of Teaneck, which is an orthodox Jewish school whose students observe the Saturday Sabbath, without inconveniencing any of the other student groups or disrupting the competition as a whole. However, the Board has refused to make such accommodations again, prompting the creation of this new organization.

“I am extremely pleased that the American Mock Trial Invitational exists. An event that celebrates our nation’s justice system, which upholds the right to freedom of religion among other liberties, should not exclude students who strictly observe their faiths. New Jersey and North Carolina’s legal organizations founded the AMTI on the just principles of tolerance and fairness that I believe should become standard practice,” said Rothman.

Over 130 students competed in the AMTI in New Brunswick, including 29 students from three New Jersey high schools. Participating New Jersey schools included the Oratory Preparation School, Middle Township High School, and Kittatinny Regional High School.

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