As a fellow criminal defense lawyer, I know how challenging the rapidly developing circumstances surrounding the coronavirus are to all of us, our offices, and our clients. I write to you today to remind you that NACDL is here, as strong as ever, to provide as much support as we are able to America’s criminal defense bar and the imperiled individuals we represent.

Just this past weekend, in the midst of a jury trial in the Southern District of New York, after the declaration of a national state of emergency and a similar declaration by New York authorities, the government refused to agree to a stay in order to protect the health and safety of all of the people involved in the trial. Their position was even more disconcerting since individuals in that U.S. Attorney’s Office have been diagnosed with the virus, and the government’s argument that no stay was necessary was predicated on the assertion that the Assistant U.S. Attorneys in the case were not showing any symptoms of having coronavirus. Yet other agencies of the same federal government have warned that one of the most pernicious aspects of the disease is that it can be transmitted by those who are asymptomatic. NACDL’s renowned Lawyers’ Assistance Strike Force was called in and late Sunday filed **[a letter](https://www.nacdl.org/Document/NACDL-Strike-Force-Letter-US-v-Andrews?_zs=WMRxN1&_zl=JLEe5" \t "_blank)** strongly supporting the motion for a stay in the case. Shortly thereafter, the government dropped its objection to a stay. And yesterday, the judge in the case granted the stay. This is your NACDL Lawyers’ Assistance Strike Force working for you.

This is also a time to remember the incredible value of NACDL’s listserves, especially as relates to sharing information, guidance, and tips for handling coronavirus-related issues in your cases. You all are a tremendous resource for each other, and many are already sharing information on NACDLConnect lists. From sample motions and briefs to orders reflecting successful efforts on behalf of our clients, I encourage you to share such content on our lists and with NACDL Senior Director of Communications Ivan Dominguez (**idominguez@nacdl.org**), who is working with members of the staff to build a coronavirus resource page that will offer links to various resources being collected by NACDL and others in the criminal justice community. Keep an eye on NACDL’s home page this week for the launch of that resource.

We can also advocate in our local communities on behalf of our clients, including the very vulnerable population of incarcerated people. Lawyers and local bar associations can request that judges, who play an important role as gatekeepers when it comes to our jails, require local detention facility authorities to disclose the steps that they are taking to protect the population in their custody. The CDC has issued a strong recommendation that people in America avoid crowds of more than 50 people for the next eight weeks. The president just issued coronavirus guidance for the next 15 days that includes avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people. Well, every jail, prison, and other detention facility in this nation is, in a very real sense, a crowd of more than 10, more than 50. And the sanitary conditions in many of these facilities were abysmal before the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic. We need to be creative as well. We should push the government to be more flexible on everything from whether a summons would suffice in lieu of a warrant, where the defendant does not pose a clear danger, to whether a voluntary surrender date can be delayed.

Some of you are learning that NACDL’s “Making Sense of Science XIII: Forensic Science and the Law Seminar,” previously scheduled to take place in Las Vegas, NV, on April 3-4, 2020, must be cancelled. That said, this is a good time to remind you that from self-study to publications, to on-demand CLE, **[NACDL’s CLE Institute](https://www.nacdl.org/Landing/CLE-Institute%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)** offers a wealth of educational options for you. NACDL will continue to monitor the evolving situation day-to-day and provide updates or potential changes to its CLE calendar as necessary.

NACDL will remain in close contact with you throughout this challenging time, keeping you updated as to the Association’s work, including its educational programs as well as its legal and policy efforts. Now more than ever, we need to come together as the criminal defense bar and support one another and the mission and vision we all hold so dearly.

Best wishes for good health to you and yours,

Nina J. Ginsberg, NACDL President