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President's Message: Numero Uno - By John A. Convery

[\[1\]Features](#)

[\[2\]John A. Convery](#)

Saturday, June 11th, 2016

I am excited and humbled to take the reins of leadership as President of TCDLA?thanks to Sam Bassett for a great year! We are the statewide criminal defense lawyers? professional association in the State of Texas. We are 3,100 members strong. We are the voice for the defense in both word and deed. I thank each and every one of you for your membership, and for your support for our TCDLA.

Thanks to Rob Fickman and his F Troop team, our project to have criminal defense lawyers read the Declaration of Independence on or about the 4th of July in every county in Texas will happen. I?m going to participate, and hope you will too. I have been watching and marginally participating in the tremendous effort and energy Mr. Fickman and company have expended to make this event happen.

After we are done fussing at King George again, I?d like this effort to read the Declaration of Independence in every county to become a springboard for a TCDLA membership drive?in every county throughout the state. Every member, sign up at least one new member this year. Start now. Sign up as many new members of TCDLA as possible. Volunteer to help with the membership drive!

If you are financially able, buy a TCDLA membership for a new criminal defense lawyer. TCDLA membership is a great gift to give a young lawyer. Membership gives a criminal defense lawyer the support of our organization, access to substantive law and practical articles in our *Voice for the Defense* magazine, Strike Force support, the incredibly useful TCDLA smartphone app, and discounts from our participating merchants.

TCDLA membership benefits also include and support our top-notch group of lobbyists. The Legislature will be in session this year! Our TCDLA Legislative Committee Chair Bill Harris, Chief Lobbyist Alan Place, and new General Counsel Andrea Keilen have been meeting with TCDLA leadership and other criminal justice groups to plan our offense and de-fense strategies to protect the Constitution, individual rights, and due process of law. We need the attention, support, and effort of every TCDLA member in the legislative process. Step up?volunteer to help in any way you can. If you are able to donate funds to support our legislative efforts, please do so now.

TCDLA has a hard-working lean staff at our home office led by Executive Director Joseph Martinez, Assistant Executive Director Melissa Schank, and Controller Mari Flores. Over the course of next year our TCDLA staff will travel throughout the state putting on some 48 continuing legal education and training seminars, some for TCDLA and others through our grant from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals to provide training for defense lawyers in Texas engaged in defense of indigent clients. In addition to this

Herculean effort, our TCDLA staff undertakes all the many administrative tasks necessary to manage our association. I thank them for their commitment to TCDLA, and hope you will thank them too!

Our CLE presentations and the committee work of TCDLA, the long-term and short-fuse projects of our standing and ad hoc committees, all depend on member volunteers. These efforts present TCDLA and its members with the opportunity to be leaders in criminal defense, to be the voice of the criminal defense community in Texas. Join us in these efforts. Volunteer to serve on a TCDLA committee.

Let's have another great year!

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[2] <http://voiceforthedefenseonline.com/source/john-convery>