2026–2027 Memo and Updates
Appeals Court

Section Updates and Procedures
The following updates have been made to the Judicial Section documents and procedures in consultation with District Directors, Section Leaders, and the State Office.

Case: *The Appeal of Callie McDaniel v. State of Texas*

Case Summary: Callie McDaniel was convicted under Texas Election Code § 255.004(d) after posting an AI-generated video depicting a political candidate accepting money from a campaign supporter shortly before an election. She argues that the law violates her First Amendment right to free speech and that the trial court improperly admitted her prior social media posts as evidence of her intent. The appeal asks the court to consider both the constitutionality of the statute and whether the social media evidence was properly admitted.

Appellate Section:
- **Question Submission Deadline:** All questions regarding case material and procedures must be submitted via the link on the Judicial Section website by September 30, 2026.
- **Response Document:** A single document containing all questions and responses will be provided by October 15, 2026.
- **Round Scoring:** As a reminder, rankings will be determined using the average of all round scores rather than a win/loss system. Evaluation sheets will continue to use a 1–10 scale and have been reformatted to make scores easier to distribute to participants.

Workshops:
- **Appeals Brief Training: October 14th --** Appeals Court: Brief Writing Workshop & Justice and Attorney Training – YMCA Texas Youth and Government

Brief Submission:
- **District Conference Briefs:** All briefs must be submitted when registering for the District Conference. The statewide registration deadline is October 25, 2026.
- **State Conference Briefs:** If briefs are revised after the District Conference, the final submission deadline is December 13, 2026, during State Conference registration.
- **Brief Submission Requirements:**
  - Briefs must be submitted in Word format.
  - A typed or electronic signature is required.
  - A missing brief will receive a score of zero.
- **Brief Scoring:** Briefs are scored at both District and State Conferences. The Appellant and Appellee brief scores will be averaged, and that average will comprise 25% of the team's overall score. Briefs will be evaluated on legal analysis, use of precedent, organization, persuasiveness, and overall writing quality.
- **Late Briefs:** Briefs received after the submission deadline will receive a five-point penalty per brief. Briefs will not be accepted after the first round of oral arguments has begun.
- **Closed Case:** Only cases and sources referenced within the Appellate Case Material may be used. Please review the Appellate Case Material for additional guidance..