

Re: Model Congress event

This letter was sent by the Executive Board of the New Rochelle High School Model Congress in reference to the March 23-24 Model Congress event scheduled to include participation by the Hewlett-Woodmere Union Free School District, Oceanside Union Free School District, Seaford Union Free School District, Long Beach City School District, Herricks Union Free School District, East Meadow Union Free School District, Lawrence Union Free School District and Wantagh Union Free School District:

2/16/18

Dear Advisors and Parents of United Model Congress,

It has come to our attention that many of you have reservations with sending your students to New Rochelle Model Congress this year in light of the adversity that our city has recently faced. In fact, we have been informed that several delegations will not be attending the event this year, despite numerous letters and phone calls from our advisors and principal, reaffirming that our school, and city at large, are indeed safe places to send your students.

Your reluctance is reasonable — over the past few months, New Rochelle has been painted with a broad brush. Local and national news outlets have falsely portrayed New Rochelle High School as a being school that is plagued with chaos and violence. If this is all you knew about New Rochelle High School, we would understand why you would not want to send your students to New Rochelle Model Congress this year. However, this is not the case. This will be New Rochelle's 54th Model Congress event, making it the oldest Model Congress organization in the country. New Rochelle Model Congress has existed for 54 years, devoid of any scandals or problems. Model Congress plays such an integral role in the lives of so many of its participants, and every year, students from across the State of New York look forward to New Rochelle Model Congress, an event that culminates our successful year of debating and growing as individuals. Seniors cherish their time at New Rochelle Model Congress when they are able to

deliver their senior speeches, one last expression of how much the club means to them.

It saddens us that this year will be different. It saddens us that students will not be able to experience their last Model Congress event, something many look forward to from their freshman year onward. And, of course, it saddens us that we will not be able to enjoy our own Model Congress event in the presence of many of our peers from other delegations. But, most of all, it saddens us that our school, the place where we spend most of our time, has been deemed unsafe by members of other school communities that we have grown so close to over the past four years. We admire the lengths you all would go to to keep your children safe. And if we thought New Rochelle's newfound portrayal was warranted, we would not blame you for telling your children not to attend our event. But all we ask of you is this: please do not let the acts of a handful of children, none of whom are involved with Model Congress, determine the reputation of a school that has over 3500 students. Please do not deduce that New Rochelle, our home, is a dangerous place, simply because that is how it has been portrayed by the media. Finally, please permit your students to attend New Rochelle Model Congress this year.

If any parent, advisor or school administrator has reservations about sending their child to our Model Congress event, we encourage them to visit New Rochelle High School at 10 a.m. on February 26 for a tour and discussion.

Our deepest regards,

The Students of New Rochelle Model Congress LIV Executive Board