

EXHIBIT A

THE CIVILITY PLEDGE

As a future leader, I recognize that my words and actions have particular importance in modeling behavior for others within my community. I also recognize that my community is comprised of individuals who hold different viewpoints on a wide range of issues, including sensitive and controversial issues. I realize that listening to and learning from different viewpoints, even when they differ from my own, is important to achieving a deeper understanding of complex issues.

In recognition of the foregoing, I hereby pledge to practice the following principles of civility during my discussions with others:

- I shall approach discussions with the goal of learning what others believe and why they believe it.
- I shall genuinely listen to opposing viewpoints and consider them fairly.
- I shall focus discussions on factual information and shall not resort to personal attacks.
- I shall not misrepresent an argument or mischaracterize an individual to incite bias.
- I shall endeavor to remain calm and maintain my composure during difficult discussions to keep the dialogue constructive.
- I shall endeavor to say what I mean without being disrespectful and communicate areas of disagreement without being disagreeable.
- I shall endeavor to find areas of agreement and shared understanding, even when certain disagreements might remain.
- I shall acknowledge when individuals are expressing their own personal preferences, social values, or opinions for which there are no right or wrong answers.

Signature: _____

Date: _____