Eighty-First Annual
DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK
The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – "A Constitutional Speech Contest"
• OFFICIAL RULES •
• 2017 - 2018 •

Sponsored By
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of New York
112 State St., Suite 1300
Albany, NY 12207
518-463-2215

Under the direction of
ORATORICAL CONTEST COMMITTEE

RENA M. NESSLER
Department Commander

JAMES W. CASEY
Department Adjutant

This brochure is published and distributed by the Oratorical Contest Committee whose names appear by authority of the Department Executive Committee.

DEPARTMENT ORATORICAL COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN: Anthony L. Paternostro
4011 Bernice Road, Seaford NY 11783
516-308-7019 PaternosAL@aol.com

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Jeffrey W. French
P.O. Box 351, Philmont, NY 12565
518-672-4757 jwfrench@verizon.net

ZONE 1: 1ST AND 9TH DISTRICTS
Chairman Michael Brophy
23 East Main Street, Stony Point, NY 10980
845-238-8161

Zone 2: 2nd and 10th DISTRICTS
Chairman Philip Barczak
1 Cliftwood Place, Kings Park, NY 11754
631-724-8577

ZONE 3: 3RD AND 4TH DISTRICTS
Chairman Margaret Folk
4 Alma Avenue, Hudson Falls, NY 12839
518-747-6855

ZONE 4: 5TH AND 6TH DISTRICTS
Chairman Philip A. Seybert
41167 State Route 180, Clayton, NY 13624
315-777-7177

ZONE 5: 7TH AND 8TH DISTRICTS
Chairman Lee Brusino
343 Wadsworth Court, Tonawanda, NY 14150
716-695-3617

NAME OF LOCAL CHAIRMAN

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – "A Constitutional Speech Contest" is to develop knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States on the part of High School students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

SPONSORSHIP

An American Legion Post will sponsor their contestants into the County level contests. This sponsorship will continue throughout the remaining contests as the contestant advances from County, to District, to Zone, to Department, ending with the National Contest.

ORGANIZATION

The contest will be under the direction of The American Legion Oratorical Contest Committee which consists of the Department of New York Commander and Adjutant, Oratorical Chair and Vice Chair. Final authority on all issues raised shall remain with the committee. Any inquiry concerning the contest should be addressed to a member of the Oratorical Contest Committee.

FINANCES

The Oratorical Contest is financed entirely by The American Legion Department of New York and the participating American Legion Posts. In sponsoring the contest, The American Legion offers nothing for sale. No admission will be charged to any contest.

AWARDS

The American Legion Department of New York offers contestants competing in the Department Finals, scholarships only, in the following amounts: 1st place - $6,000, 2nd - $4,000, 3rd - $2,500, 4th - $2,000, and 5th - $2,000. Contestants must give both their Prepared Oration and Assigned Topic Discourse in order to receive the scholarship moneys they are entitled to. Payments are made directly to your college and are awarded over a four year period. The scholarships awarded by The American Legion, Department of New York to the five Department Finalists may be used to attend any college or university in the United States.

The Zone level awards are as follows: 1st place $800.00; 2nd - $600.00, 3rd - $300, and 4th - $300. If for any reason the Zone winner is unable to compete in the Department of New York Contest; the next Zone contestant that is available to compete will take his or her place. The Zone Winner will not relinquish their title as the Zone Champion.

All awards mentioned above are awarded by the Department of New York and can only be won by contestants competing in the New York Contest. Contestants in the District, Zone and Department contests must give both their Prepared Oration and Assigned Topic Discourse in order to receive the award they are entitled to. Travel and hotel expenses are paid by the Department of New York for contestants and chaperone in the Department of New York finals.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible participants in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – "A Constitutional Speech Contest" shall be **citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.**

All contestants must be bonafide students herein described as any student under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Finals Contest and who is presently enrolled in high school or junior high school (public, military, private, or parochial, or who are home schooled) in which the curriculum is considered to be of high school grade level commencing with grade nine (**9**) and terminating with grade twelve (**12**). Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of the contest. High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the Department finals contest. Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition in only one department (state).

TIME AND PLACE OF ELIMINATION CONTEST

County, District, and Zone Contests will be held in a timely manner to coincide with Department and National certification dates. The Department Contest will take place March 3, 2018. If the contest is cancelled due to inclement weather it will take place on March 10, 2018.

ELIMINATION CONTESTS

The contest shall be conducted on the basis of successive elimination contests: first by **Schools (if applicable)**, second by **Semi-County** and/or **County,** third by **Semi-Districts and/or Districts,** and fourth by **Zones**. The Zone contestants will compete for State honors and prizes at a contest to be held during the month of March.

The high school authorities are authorized, but not obligated, to conduct a contest to select their entries. A school may enter up to three (3) students into the County Contest provided the school certifies each student's entry on the official entry form (FORM # 1). A student who attends school in a county that does not participate in this program, but resides in a county that does participate, shall petition the Department Chairman for entry in the contest where he/she resides, provided, however, the school the student attends certifies his/her entry. If neither county participates (that is, where the student attends school or where he/she resides), the school certifying the student shall petition the Department Chairman for entry into another County Contest and/or entry into the District Contest. There are no limitations on home schoolers, but the official entry form (FORM # 1) must be submitted. Home schoolers must compete in the county they reside in. If the county they live in does not participate in this program they may petition the Department Chairman to compete in the next closest county that does. Students will be allowed to read their orations at the HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL ONLY. At all contests above the high school level, including semi-county contests, contestants will be required to present their speeches from memory.

Each District will structure their contest to conform to the number of contestants that have applied to compete in the County contests, and how many will advance into the District contest or contests. **No County or District will have more than six contestants in any preliminary or final contests unless approved by the Department Chairman.** The District Chairman will report the first and second place winners to the Zone Chairman.

A contestant who may have no competition in any contest, shall be certified as the winner of that contest, and said contestant shall be eligible for the next higher competition.

NATIONAL CONTEST

National Contest is tentatively on April 13 to 15, 2018, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The New York State winner is eligible to participate in the National Quarter Finals Contest. The winner of this contest is eligible to compete in the National Semi-finals Contest. The winner of this contest then participates as one of the Three National Finalists where 1st place is awarded a college scholarship of $18,000, 2nd - $16,000, and 3rd - $14,000. **The three National Finalists are ineligible for further participation at any level.**

CONTEST REGULATIONS

The Department of New York rules as set down in this brochure follow the National Rules very closely. This is done in order to prepare the contestant for the Department of New York finals and succeeding National Contests.

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required of all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear clothing with school names or awards and medals from previous competitions.

The use of notes, amplification, lecterns, or speakers' stand by contestants, or prompting in any manner is **NOT** permitted **EXCEPT** at the high school level. The use of any type of audio/video recording, electronic/digital data gathering, receiving, and/or transmitting equipment in any form by the contestants or members of the audience is prohibited.

A drawing shall be held by an official of the contest to determine the order in which all contestants will appear. This order will remain the same for both the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse.

The time allotted for each contestant to deliver their prepared oration shall not be **less than eight (8) or more than ten (10) minutes** and for the assigned topic oration, **not less than three (3) or more than five (5) minutes**.

An official timer shall be named by the Contest chairman whose duty shall be to keep an accurate time record of each contestant and the timekeeper shall be located on the main floor in full view of the contestants. **The timekeeper shall begin timing each contestant at the start of the prepared oration**. The timer will be equipped with time cards for the prepared oration carrying the numbers 8, 9, and 10. When 8 minutes have elapsed, the time warning card with the figure 8 thereon shall be shown to the speaker, following with cards 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing the numbers 3, 4, and 5 during the assigned topic discourse. The Contest Chairman shall announce the time used by each contestant for the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse immediately after each contestant speaks. The Contest Chairman will then announce any violation of time for each contestant for the benefit of the judges. **A Penalty of ONE (1) POINT will be deducted from the final score for each minute, or fraction thereof, over or under allotted time for the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse.**

In the prepared oration, as well as in the assigned topic discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than **ten (10)** words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally. **The singing of a song(s) is not permitted and will result in the IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION of the contestant. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.**

ALL CONTESTANTS AT EACH CONTEST LEVEL ARE REQUIRED TO SPEAK IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FOR BOTH THE PREPARED ORATION AND THE ASSIGNED TOPIC ORATION. It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic in order to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. It is to be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in the English language.

THE PREPARED ORATION

The prepared oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen of our government. The same subject and oration used in the county, district, and zone contests must be used in the department and national contest.

The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight minutes or more than 10 minutes for delivery.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be electronic or paper form. They may consult their copy of their prepared oration, until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest, at which time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room. All will be returned to the contestant at the end of the contest.

ASSIGNED TOPIC

Prior to the District Contest, the assigned topic discourse will be omitted, however, beginning with the District contest and all further contests this portion of the contest will be included.

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three minutes or more than five minutes for deliver. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

The assigned topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his/her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States selected from Articles and Sections as listed under assigned topics for the current year's contest in this brochure.

During the preparation period, the contestant must not consult any books or person and may refer only to the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn.

JUDGING STANDARDS

The judges are a very integral part of the Oratorical Contest. Their qualifications are considered carefully as the decision of the judges is final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and success of the program which results in the selection of a Department Champion and, ultimately, a National Champion. No contest should be judged by an even number of judges.

JUDGING SYSTEM

No publicity should be given to the names of the judges prior to the Contest. During the Contest, the judges shall be seated in different locations in the auditorium and each judge shall render his/her decision without consultation with other judges or any other people.

Judges will be advised that lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and assigned topic discourse on the duties and obligation of a citizen must result in their downgrading the contestant involved. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of **ten (10) points** for failure to speak on the Constitution.

The Contest Chairman will announce any violation to time for each contestant. **A penalty of one point for each minute or fraction thereof shall be assessed against the contestant's total score. A copy of the judge's scorecard is on the last page of this brochure.**

The judges, tabulators and the Contest Chairman, following the last Assigned Topic Discourse, will proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation.

County, District, and Zone Chairmen are required to review all judges' scorecards from their respective contests within forty-eight (48) hours to ensure that the appropriate final results was certified based on official rules, regulations, scoring, and tie-breaking procedures. If a mistake is found within twenty-four (24) hours, the respective chairman will contact the Department of New York Oratorical Chairman at ((H) 516-308-7019 or (C) 516-361-4687) for further instructions. Protests are subject to the same twenty-four (24) hour rule. Exactly twenty-four (24) hours after a contest results are announced, those results become **OFFICIAL** and **CANNOT** be changed.

TABULATORS

The Contest Chairman will appoint no less than three tabulators for the Department Finals contest. It will be their responsibility to review the judges' scorecards to be certain they are fully tabulated and signed before they are submitted for final tabulation. The Record of Choice will be used to determine the winner. If there is a tie the use of the two-way and three-way tie breaking procedure will be used.

Judges scorecards for Department Finals **will not be divulged** to anyone at the site of the contest. The judges' scorecards become the property of The American Legion Department of New York.

DISQUALIFICATION

If, due to a violation of the contest regulations, a contestant is disqualified or voluntarily withdraws from the contest after having progressed through one or more of its stages, his/her place is to be taken by the contestant adjudged next best to him/her in the competition in which he/she participated prior to disqualification or withdrawal.

Should a contestant become suddenly unable to compete or withdraws from competition, then his/her place is to be taken by the contestant adjudged next best to him/her in the last competition in which he/she participated prior to his/her disability or withdrawal, provided said contestant is available and can proceed with the competition without unduly delaying the contest. If said contestant cannot be made available in time to receive briefing and permit starting the contest at the posted time, then the contest shall proceed with the available contestants.

Assigned Topics for 2018 Oratorical Contest

Amendment 2

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment 3

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment 15

Section 1.
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2.
The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Article 2 Section 4

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

PAST WINNERS
New York State High School Oratorical
Scholarship Program – "A Constitutional Speech Contest"

Year	Winner	Home Town
1939 **	Thomas Haggerty	Rosedale
1951 *	Ronald Hengen	Queens
1953 **	Joel Bernstein	Buffalo
1954*	George J. Clements	Penn Yan
1955*	David Leahy	Brooklyn
1957*	William Toth	Bronx
1961**	Robert J. O'Connell	Bronx
1968**	John Cangilos	Albany
1973*	Jeanne Zurmuhlen	Staten Island
1978*	David Silva	Staten Island
1980*	Paul C. Kunhel	Garden City
1981-1982	Robert Barber	Watertown
1983	Susan Noto	Williamson
1984	Joseph Clark	Lackawanna
1985	Regina Biscoglio	Bronxville
1986	Kedra Small	Buffalo
1987	Julie Kay Kuhns	Binghamton
1988	Marie I. Bodack	Yonkers
1989	John C. Stehlin	Buffalo
1990	James Hogan	Sodus
1991	Katheryne Leccima	Spring Valley
1992	Julie Rose Kidd	Frewsburg
1993	Amy Christine DiStasio	Staten Island
1994	Kelly Cleary	Brooklyn
1995**	Aron Egner	Ballston Lake
1996*	Lina Shah	Chestnut Ridge
1997	Christopher Geisel	Clifton Park
1998-1999	Lisa Schwartz	East Hills
2000	Heather Derrigo	Watertown
2001	Kara French	Philmont
2002-2003	Natasha S. Alford	Syracuse
2004	Jessica Kye Fredette	Syracuse
2005	Evan Patrick Geary	Webster
2006	Rory A. Eaton	Wantagh
2007	Serena R. White	Franklin
2008	Alanna Parisi	Staten Island
2009	Kashyap Rajagopal	New York
2010	Madison Malone Kircher	Warren
2011	Steven Velardo, Jr.	Dutchess
2012	Caitlin Kennedy	Dix Hills
2013	Jacob Caldwell	Chautauqua
2014	Andrew Russo Hartnett	Cobleskill
2015	Jessica Heather Norris	Almond
2016	Melissa A. Woodford	New City
2017	Jared Rios	Kings

*Denotes National Finalist **Denotes National Winner

(l-r) 2017 Department Commander John B. Sampson & 2017 Department of New York Oratorical Champion Jared Rios

JARED RIOS

Jared is a hardworking student, and engages in many extracurricular activities, such as Harvard Model Congress, Math Club, Investment Team, and the track team. He wants to be the best student and person he can possibly be, so he makes sure to do his very best in everything he does. This was his third year doing the American Legion Speech contest, and with each year, he is certain that he has improved exponentially as an orator. He'd like to pursue a career involving public speaking later in life, wanting to major in political science at Harvard University. From there, he intends to go to law school and become a politician, with President of the United States being the political office he seeks the most. He was sponsored by the Floyd Bennett Post 1060 of Kings County, 2nd District, and Zone 2.

JUDGE NUMBER: _____

Sheet No. 10
DEPARTMENT
LEVEL

THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK
HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - "A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST"
SUBJECT: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

NAME OF JUDGE: _____ DATE: _____

A. Content		Contestants 1	2	3	4	5
1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct applying the student's knowledge?	*Prepared Oration 12 points*					
	Assigned Topic 4 points					
2. Did the student skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies, and specific data?	*Prepared Oration 12 points*					
	Assigned Topic 4 points					
3. Was the speech logical, well organized, and developed?	*Prepared Oration 12 points*					
	Assigned Topic 4 points					
4. Did the student show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?	*Prepared Oration 16 points*					
	Assigned Topic 6 points					
B. Speaking Skills		1	2	3	4	5
1. Did the student use volume, rate, pitch, and diction effectively?	*Prepared Oration 6 points*					
	Assigned Topic 4 points					
2. Rate the speaker's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, and transitions.	*Prepared Oration 6 points*					
	Assigned Topic 4 points					
3. Were body actions (poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions) appropriate?	*Prepared Oration 6 points*					
	Assigned Topic 4 points					
SUB-TOTAL						
PENALTY: 1 POINT FOR EACH MINUTE OR FRACTION THEREOF OVER OR UNDER ALLOTTED TIME	Prepared Oration					
	Assigned Topic					
PENALTY: 1-10 POINTS FOR FAILURE TO SPEAK ON THE CONSTITUTION						
Final Total Points						
POSITION NUMBER - RECORD OF CHOICE Highest Points = 1st place Second highest points = 2nd place, etc.						

Score all contestants - NO TIES PERMITTED

Judge's Signature: _____

Revised June 1, 2014