“A Constitutional Speech Contest”

Official Department of Tennessee 2020 Rules

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DEADLINE FOR CERTIFYING CONTESTANTS
January 10, 2020. WE WILL NOT EXTEND THE CERTIFICATION DATE

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
STATE CONTEST
Winner - $3,000*
First Runner-up - $2,000
Second Runner-up - $1,000

All contestants participating in a District contest, and not advancing to the Division contest, will receive a $25 check. District winners not advancing to the Department (state) finals, and participating in the Division contest, will receive a $100 check. These checks are mailed after the state contest to the home of the contestant.

The three finalists in the Department contest shall receive scholarships which may be used to attend any post-secondary educational institution in the United States for advanced education beyond high school, to include vocational, college or university.

Scholarship awardees will have one year, after high school graduation, to apply for the scholarship funds. If application is not made in writing to the American Legion Department of Tennessee, 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37214 within one year, the scholarship funds revert to the oratorical account.

Any scholarship awardee entering active military service within the one-year grace period will retain their scholarship, providing the awardee notifies The American Legion Department of Tennessee, in writing, of their entry into service. Upon entry into the military service, the awardee needs to advise The American Legion Department of Tennessee of their address annually. If awardee does not apply within five years of the date of entering active military service, the scholarship funds will revert to the oratorical account.

CONTEST ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION
Any student enrolled in high school, junior high school, or state accredited home school (public, private, parochial or military) in grades 9-12, may enter a contest in the District Oratorical Contest.

The School contestants shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States, enrolled in school and under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Finals Contest.

A school official must certify the Oratorical Contestant and send the enclosed certification form to the Oratorical Contest Chairman at the following address: The American Legion, Department of Tennessee, 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214 by January 10, 2020.

HIGH SCHOOL
Please make your contestants aware of the January 10th, 2020 Contest Certification deadline as well as contest dates so they have sufficient time to prepare their orations. Again, a School Officer must sign the enclosed Official Certification form confirming contestants’ enrollment in School. Students will compete within their District.

DISTRICT
District Chairmen will conduct a District Oratorical Contest within their respective Districts during the weeks of January 15 through February 1, 2020. Upon completion the District Chairman will certify the contest winner and subsequent runners up to Department Headquarters.

District Chairmen may elect to conduct a District Semi-Final Contest within a District if the District has a large number of contestants. The Semi-final Contests as well as the final District Contest must be held between the dates of January 15 through February 1, 2020. Semi-Final winners will compete to determine District winner.

In the event of severe weather, the District Chairman may reschedule the contest as long as the contest remains within the aforementioned specified period.

District winners shall compete in the Division contest, if the winner cannot compete, the first runner-up may replace the winner.

DIVISION
A contest will be conducted in the three divisions of the state February 11-29, 2020. The Division Chairman will certify the winner to Department Headquarters upon contest completion. Division winners shall compete in the Department (State) Contest.

DEPARTMENT (STATE)
We have scheduled the Department (State) Contest for March 7, 2020 at The American Legion Headquarters Building, 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37214.
GENERAL INFORMATION
The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest” is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship.

SCHOLARSHIPS
The American Legion National Organization presents Scholarship Awards to the three finalists in the final round of the National Contest as follows: 1st place: $18,000; 2nd place: $16,000; 3rd place: $14,000.
Each Department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the first round of the national contest will receive a $1,500 scholarship. Each first round winner who advances to and participates in the second round, but does not advance to the final round, will receive an additional $1,500 scholarship to pursue education beyond high school. *The individual winning both the State and National Finals will receive a total scholarship of $22,500.
The national organization of The American Legion will award scholarships to the three finalists, Department winners, and first round winners who are eliminated during the second round of competition. These scholarships may be used to attend any college or university in the United States.

A contestant must give both his or her prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse to receive the scholarship. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the National organization, there are several hundred scholarships awarded at the discretion of intermediate organizations, to participants at post, district or county, and department levels of competition.

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE CONTESTS
Department final contests shall conform to National contest procedures, rules and regulations.
If the American Legion Department of Tennessee were to certify a winner to the National Americanism Division of The American Legion and the Department did not conduct its final competition in conformity with the rules and regulations as set forth herein, in the judgment of the director of the Americanism Division or the director’s representative, be disqualified from competition in the national contest.
The Department of Tennessee may certify one contestant into the national contest. If for any reason the state winner is unable to compete in the national contest, the department first runner-up may be substituted following approval by The American Legion’s National Americanism Commission. A department first runner-up accepted into national competition will be entitled to all national awards, entitlements and compensation that the department winner would have received had he/she participated at that level.

CONTEST INFORMATION
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 to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the 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 in electronic or paper form. They may consult the 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.

ASSIGNED TOPIC
The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three minutes or more than five minutes for delivery. 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 minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States, as listed under assigned topics for the current year’s contest in this brochure.
No foreign languages or songs. All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.
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. The vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in the English language.
Also, the singing of a song in any language 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.
In the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author’s name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.
ASSIGNED TOPICS FOR 2020

Amendment XII
The Electors shall meet in their respective states, and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate; — The President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted; — The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in the case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President. — The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

Amendment XX
Section. 1. The terms of the President and Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.
Section. 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.
Section. 3. If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.
Section. 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.
Section. 5. Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.
Section. 6. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

Amendment XXIV
Section. 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.
Section. 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXVII
No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

CONTEST REGULATIONS
A drawing shall be held by the official in charge of the contest to determine the order in which the contestants will appear. The contest chairman shall announce the title of the contestant’s prepared oration immediately after introducing him/her as contestant No. 1, contestant No. 2, etc. The chairman will request the audience to refrain from applause until the judges have made their decision. A raised platform is not compulsory; however, it is strongly recommended. The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker’s stand by contestants or prompting in any manner is not permitted. Props of any type are not permitted. The use of any type of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving and/or transmitting equipment in any form by contestants or members of the audience is prohibited. The time allotted for each contestant to deliver their prepared oration shall not be less than eight or more than ten minutes, and for the assigned topic, not less than three or more than five minutes. An official timer shall be named by the contest chairman whose duty it shall be to keep an accurate time record of each contestant, and he 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 should be equipped with a stopwatch and time cards for the prepared oration carrying the figures 8, 9 and 10. When eight minutes have been used, the time warning card with the figure 8 thereon shall be placed in full view of the speaker, following with 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing 3, 4 and 5 during the assigned topic discourse. The contest chairman shall announce the time consumed by each contestant for the prepared oration and the assigned topic immediately after each contestant speaks for the benefit of the judges. Contestants are required to remain in a private room, where the discourse of the other speakers cannot be heard; until it is their turn to speak (contestants will be under the supervision of an individual appointed by the contest chairman). As the contestants conclude their prepared orations, they must return to a soundproof holding room. As each speaker concludes his or her assigned topic discourse, they shall not be allowed to associate with contestants who have not fulfilled the assigned topic requirement. Approximately five minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the assigned topic discourse, contestant No. 1 will be informed of the topic drawn for the assigned topic and shall be permitted to retire to privacy under the direction of an individual appointed by the contest chairman, whose duty it shall be to see that no contestant is permitted to consult any text matter or notes having any connection with the subject matter upon which he/she is to speak, other than the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn. Each succeeding contestant will be called upon in the order in which he/she previously appeared. He/she shall also, in turn, be informed of the topic of the assigned topic discourse and shall then be escorted to privacy in the manner as provided for contestant No. 1.

TRAVEL EXPENSES
The national organization of The American Legion will pay the travel and lodging expenses of department winners and their chaperones to the national contest. All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age. The national organization of The American Legion will not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en-route to or from the contest; however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants certified into the national competition. Contestants will travel by an air carrier selected by the national organization of The American Legion or personal automobile if previously approved by the national organization of The American Legion.

TV AND RADIO
Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests as well as taping or other types of media for later showing, provided: 1) the lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants; 2) the taping or broadcasts shall in no way distract the contestants or interfere with the announced scheduled time of the contest; 3) the normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium; and 4) The American Legion is in no way financially obligated without its prior approval.

JUDGES
The judges are an 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 national champion. All department finals and the national contest must use five judges. No publicity shall be given to the names of the judges in advance of the contest. During the contest, the judges will be seated in different locations in the auditorium and each judge shall render his or her final decision without consultation with other judges or any other person. Judges will be advised that a lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government must result in their downgrading the contestant. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of 10 points for failure to speak about the Constitution. The contest chairman will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant’s total score. The judges, timekeepers, tabulators and the contest chairman, following the last assigned topic discourse, may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation. The decision of the judges is final.

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. Judges’ scorecards for department finals and the national contest will not be divulged to anyone at the site of the contest. The judges’ scorecards become the property of The American Legion National Headquarters.

NATIONAL FINALS CONTEST
The national finals contest will be held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West April 17-19, 2020 in Indianapolis. Quarter-final and semi-final contests are scheduled to be held on Saturday, April 17. The championship is scheduled for Sunday, April 19.

All contestants and chaperones will arrive on the Friday of the contest weekend. All contestants will be lodged at a hotel to be determined in Indianapolis. A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will be held the Friday evening of the contest weekend. A banquet honoring all contestants will be held the Sunday afternoon of the contest weekend. All contestants and chaperones will depart for home late Sunday afternoon.