



90TH ANNUAL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

A CONSTITUTIONAL
SPEECH CONTEST



A Scholarship Opportunity

For students seeking an academic challenge and an opportunity to earn college scholarship money, the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is a natural fit. For more than 80 years, this constitutional speech contest has educated youth on our nation's founding document, with an emphasis on citizenship.

The main purpose of the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution among students. Participants also grow in leadership ability, their capacity to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and understanding of the rights, responsibilities, obligations and privileges of U.S. citizens.

\$14,200 in Scholarships

Scholarships awarded may be used to attend any college/university, junior college or vocational educational institution within the United States. They must be used within 4 years from high school graduation (unless interrupted by service in the Armed Forces). Funds for scholarships are provided by department membership dues.

 Name _____

 Phone _____

 Email _____

**CONTACT YOUR
LOCAL AMERICAN
LEGION CONTACT
TODAY!**

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) 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 full text for the assigned topic, will be made known to each contestant approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the U.S. Constitution, selected from Articles and Sections as listed under assigned topics for this year's contest in this brochure.

2027 ASSIGNED TOPICS

By action of the National Americanism Commission, the Assigned Topics shall be used in ALL 2027 contests. They are as follows:

The Preamble - We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article VI Paragraph 2 - This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Amendment XIV Section 3 - No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Amendment XXII Section 1 - No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS SCHOLARSHIPS

Semi-finals (Division Level Contest)

1st Place at Division..... advances to State Contest

2nd Place Receives \$500 scholarship*

3rd Place Receives \$200 scholarship*

4th* PlaceReceives \$150 scholarship*

5th* PlaceReceives \$150 scholarship*

*unless advances to State Contest

*Divisions wishing to award 6 scholarships can reduce the 4th and 5th place scholarship to \$100 to award a 6th place \$100 scholarship

Finals

1st Place: \$2000 scholarship

2nd Place: \$1500 scholarship

3rd Place: \$1200 scholarship

4th Place: \$1000 scholarship

5th Place: \$1000 scholarship

6th Place: \$500 scholarship

7th Place: \$500 scholarship

8th Place: \$500 scholarship

9th Place: \$500 scholarship

10th Place: \$500 scholarship

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

1st Place.....\$25,000.00

2nd Place.....\$22,500.00

3rd Place.....\$20,000.00

First Round Contestants will receive a **\$2,000.00 scholarship** and each Second Round Contestant who does not proceed to the National Finals will receive a **\$2,000.00 scholarship**.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION and DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS FORMS:

WWW.ILLEGION.ORG

RULES & REGULATIONS

SUBJECT TO BE USED FOR PREPARED ORATION

The subject to be used for the prepared oration in the Oratorical Contest must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution with emphasis on a citizen's duties and obligations 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 (8) or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery. The penalty for plagiarism will be disqualification. It must bear a title which is to be announced by the contest Moderator when he or she introduces the contestant; i.e.: "Contestant No. 1, the title of their oration is", etc.

In the prepared oration and/or assigned topic, quotations must always be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than ten words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally. It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases in a foreign language to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. It should be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in English. Singing is not permitted and will result in immediate disqualification. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song(s) provided proper attribution is made. A raised platform is not mandatory; however, it is strongly recommended. The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand or any manner of prompting is not permitted. Props are not permitted. *For a full review of Oratorical Contest Rules and Regulations go to: <http://www.legion.org/oratorical/rules>*

CONTESTANT CERTIFICATION

Each of the (5) five Divisions may have up to two (2)* contestants compete at the Department of Illinois Oratorical Contest that is scheduled for March 6, 2027. *Divisions may have and are limited to NOT MORE than (2) two Alternates.

The Oratorical Application, Communication Agreement and a sponsor check in the amount of \$175 for each contestant must be sent to the respective Division Americanism Chairman no later than January 15, 2027. It is highly recommended that either the Post, County, or District host a contest. ***The Division level is required to host a CONTEST or at minimum a detailed contest ORIENTATION with contestants ensuring they are prepared for the next level of competition.***

CONTESTANT ELIGIBILITY

All contestants must be Lawful Permanent Residents of the United States of America and bona fide students in secondary schools (Public, Parochial, Military, Private and Home Schools) under the age of 20 years on the date of the National Finals Program whose academic curriculum is of Public High School level, and enrolled in classes equivalent to the regular 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades on January 1 of the year when such National Programs are conducted.

2026 AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS ORATORICAL CONTEST WINNER **CHAITHRIKA SRIPATHI**

(pictured on cover with Department of Illinois Leadership
and pictured below with the other 2026 contest finalists)



**For a full list of
The American Legion
Department of Illinois
Americanism Division Chairmen,
please visit The American
Legion state website.
Info and QR**



VETERANS STRENGTHENING
AMERICA

NATIONAL SEMI FINAL OR FINALS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS FROM ILLINOIS

1943: Burton Bernard, Granite City
1959: Roger R. Majak, Lansing
1973: Joshn Wesley Frost, Peoria
1975: Gretchen Winter, Chicago
1977: Mark R. Thompson, Glenn Ellyn
1982: William Kephart, Jr., Chillicothe
2004: Jacqueline Keidel, Berwyn
2005: Joshua Wilson, Gridley
2007: Jared Canfield, Naperville
2009: Heidi Erbsen, Pearl City
2012: Athena Saldanha, Schaumburg
2015: Rowan Macwan, Naperville
2019: Caleb Maue, Homer Glen

visit
<https://www.illegion.org/programs-services/americanism-commission/>
for a full list of previous Department of
Illinois Scholarship winners.



Scan here to visit The American Legion Department of Illinois Website
www.illegion.org

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