



**THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA**

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**TO:** MN High School Guidance Counselors and Speech Departments  
**FROM:** Sylvan Fix, Oratorical Chairman  
**SUBJECT:** 2019 High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

Each year The American Legion sponsors the National High School Oratorical Contest, "A Constitutional Speech Contest", for high school students in grades 9-12, including those home-schooled in your school districts. Enclosed is a brochure outlining the program as to rules and requirements for participation. It also contains the information on scholarships offered and how they are awarded.

The American Legion, Department of Minnesota, is divided into 10 Districts. Each District will conduct an Oratorical Contest. The Districts are outlined on the back of the enclosed brochure to assist you. Please contact your local American Legion Post, or the District Chairperson in your area to find out when and where your Post and District contests will be held. The District Chairman's name, address and phone numbers are also provided in the Minnesota Rules brochure.

The winners from each District will compete in the State contest. The State Champion will move up to the National level competition.

The Department (State) Oratorical Contests are held in two posts. Semi-final competition will be held at **Anoka Post 102 and Osseo Post 172 on the morning of Saturday, March 2, 2019, with the final competition at Anoka Post 102 in the afternoon of that day.** A lunch will be served Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12:00 P.M. at Anoka Post 102 – just prior to the final competition, which will begin between 1:00 and 1:30 P.M. Because of Minnesota's unpredictable weather in the winter, a hotel/motel room will be provided for each candidate and his/her chaperone for Friday, March 1, 2019.

The four finalists in the State competition will receive scholarships, which may be used to attend any post-secondary educational institution in the United States. Award amounts are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> place - \$1,500; 2<sup>nd</sup> place - \$1,000; 3<sup>rd</sup> place - \$700; 4<sup>th</sup> place - \$500.

The National Oratorical Contest will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana April 5-7, 2019, with a travel day on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Travel and expenses will be provided for each contestant and their chaperone. The three finalists in the National Contest are awarded (1<sup>st</sup>) \$18,000, (2<sup>nd</sup>) \$16,000 and, (3<sup>rd</sup>) \$14,000 respectively, and each State level winner that competes at the National level will receive a \$1,500 scholarship.

**The High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest is one of the best programs offered by The American Legion, and affords opportunities for High School students to win valuable scholarships for their future education. Please ensure this information is disseminated to your student body accordingly. If you are not contacted by your local American Legion Post, please contact the Post Commander and/or Adjutant for assistance. You may also contact the District representative listed on the brochure. The link to the National site is: <https://www.legion.org/publications/160901/oratorical-contest-rules>.**

You may reproduce the enclosed Minnesota Rules as needed and provide to the kids, their parents and/or sponsors, and school districts. Make the information available to those kids who are home schooled as well. The American Legion is proud to further the future of our children!

If you are unable to reach your Post or District representatives regarding the Oratorical Program, please contact me, Sy Fix, at 507-313-3376 or [papafix1@gmail.com](mailto:papafix1@gmail.com) or Department at 651-291-1800 or [jkelly@mnlegion.org](mailto:jkelly@mnlegion.org).

enclosures

# THE AMERICAN LEGION High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

*“A Constitutional Speech Contest”*



## *Official Rules*

> 2019

### *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*

Scholarship awards are presented 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 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.

### *Department contests*

Arrangements for contests leading to the department finals shall be the responsibility of each department (state) organization of The American Legion. For those levels of competition prior to the department finals, the rules and regulations set forth in this brochure are not mandatory — they are offered as a guideline. However, all department finals contests shall conform with national contest procedures, rules and regulations, if the department wishes its finalist to compete in the national finals.

A winner certified to the National Americanism Division of The American Legion by a department which did not conduct its final competition in conformity with the rules and regulations as set forth herein may, in the judgment of the director of the Americanism Division or the director's representative, be disqualified from competition in the national contest.

Each department may certify one contestant into the national contest. If for any reason the department 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.

Department contest winners must be certified to the National Americanism Division, **NO LATER THAN MARCH 18, 2019.**

Failure to meet this deadline could result in disqualification of the contestant.

For information about the Oratorical Contest in your state, contact your American Legion post or state headquarters.

## Eligibility

Eligible participants in the contest shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of 20 years on the date of the national contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or home school), commencing with grade nine and terminating with grade 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.

The three finalists of the national contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

## 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 2019

**Amendment 1:** Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**Amendment 4:** The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

**Amendment 13.** 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

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

**Amendment 21.** 1. The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

2. The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.



*2018 American Legion National Oratorical Contest winner Carlissa Frederich of Paducah, Ky., is presented her first-place plaque from National Commander Denise H. Rohan and Americanism Chairman Richard Anderson at the Wyndham Hotel in Indianapolis on Sunday, April 15, 2018.*

*Photo — Clay Lomneth*

## **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 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 10 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.

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is to be worn by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

## 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 5-7, 2019, in Indianapolis. Quarter-final and semi-final contests are scheduled to be held on Saturday, April 6. The championship is scheduled for Sunday, April 7.
- 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.

## For more information

Individuals interested in learning more about the contest should contact:

- For dates, sites and deadline information concerning **local, district and state level competition**, individuals should **contact their nearby American Legion post or their state headquarters office of The American Legion.**
- For information concerning the **national contest**, contact: Americanism Division, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055; telephone (317) 630-1204; or email [oratorical@legion.org](mailto:oratorical@legion.org).

# High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

★ 2019 ★  
MINNESOTA CONTEST RULES

Sponsored by  
**DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA**  
20 West 12<sup>th</sup> St., Room 300A  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

**THE AMERICAN LEGION**  
National Americanism Commission  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206



Approved by  
**The National Association of  
Secondary-School Principals**  
Since 1943

**EIGHTY-SECOND  
HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL  
CONTEST**

The purpose of The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States on the part of High School Students, and to win Scholarship money. 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.

THE STATE SEMI-FINALS WILL BE HELD SATURDAY, March 2, 2019, AT THE OSSEO AND ANOKA AMERICAN LEGION POSTS IN THE MORNING. THE FINALS WILL BE HELD IN THE AFTERNOON AT THE ANOKA AMERICAN LEGION POST. All District Contestants MUST be certified to Department Headquarters no later than **February 15, 2019**.

## SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The four finalists in the American Legion Department of Minnesota Contest receive scholarships which may be used to attend any post-secondary educational institution in the United States. Winners receive \$1,500; Runner-Up receives \$1,000; 3rd place \$700; 4th place \$500.

## NATIONAL LEVEL COMPETITION

The 2019 National Oratorical Contest will be held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West April 5-7, 2019, in Indianapolis, Indiana. Quarter-final and semi-finals are scheduled for Saturday, April 6, with the Championship round on Sunday, April 7. April 5th will be a travel day for contestants.

Scholarship awards in the amount of 1st place - \$18,000; 2nd place - \$16,000; 3rd place - \$14,000 are presented to the three finalists in the Final Round. Each Department (State) winner who 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.

### DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA CONTESTS ALL CONTESTS TO CONFORM TO NATIONAL CONTEST RULES EXCEPT AS LISTED BELOW:

**POST:** Local contests should be held prior to December 31, 2018. Notes and prompting is permitted at the Post level if all are treated in a like manner. **The extemporaneous (assigned topic) is not required at the local contest.** Each Post is encouraged to send a Post winner to the District level competition. If you have more than 1 competitor, you will need to hold a local contest to determine your winner who will advance to the District competition.

**DISTRICT:** Each District Chairperson will notify the Posts within their District of the site, date and time of their District contest, **preferably before February 15th.** This contest will be conducted using the National rules, and will include the extemporaneous (assigned topic) feature. **District Chairpersons shall certify to the Department Headquarters a District Champion from a Post in their respective District no later than February 15, 2019.** Winner must be certified in writing, and your winner information must be on the **2019 District Winner Form.**

### ELIGIBILITY

Eligible participants in the American Legion Oratorical Contest shall be citizens and/or residents of the United States, and a bona fide student herein described as any student under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Finals Contest and who are presently enrolled in a high school (public, parochial, military, private or registered home school) in which the curriculum of said high school is considered to be of high school level commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school during the time of participation at any level of **The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest.** **The three finalists of a National Finals Contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.**

### Assigned Topics for 2019 Oratorical Contest

#### Amendment 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

#### Amendment 4

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

#### Amendment 13

1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

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

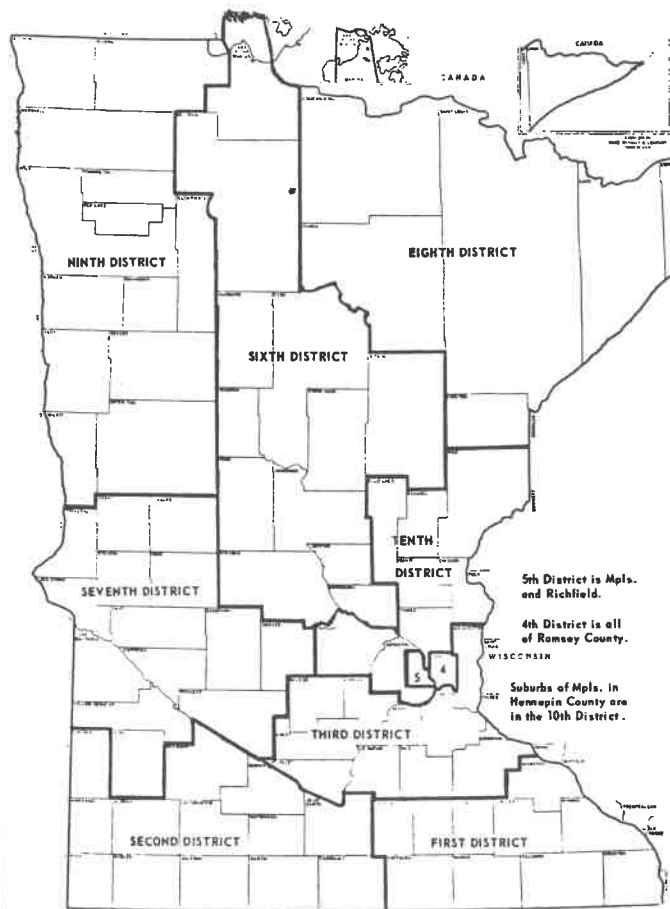
#### Amendment 21

1. The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

2. The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

## The 10 Districts American Legion Dept. of MN



### DISTRICT ORATORICAL CONTEST CHAIRPERSONS

First	Sylvan Fix	507-313-3376	papafix1@gmail.com
Second	Brad Pagel	605-366-3025	bppagel@gmail.com
Third	Randy Maluchnik	612-964-5382	randymaluchnik@comcast.net
Fourth	Dave Dahl	651-917-8487	david.charles.dahl@gmail.com
Fifth	Richard Ward	612-656-9150	rgward49@gmail.com
Sixth	Jim Lucas	218-821-7347	hjlucas@tds.net
Seventh	Harold Meyer	507-865-4518	hal.meyer@frontiernet.net
Eighth	Jennifer Havlick	218-206-5796	jennifer.havlick@frontier.com
Ninth	Bill Dumke	218-329-1063	billdumke@yahoo.com
Tenth	Cliff Newman	612-298-7259	cancnewman226@gmail.com

#### **Other**

State Chair	Sylvan Fix	507-313-3376	papafix1@gmail.com
Vice Chair	Cliff Newman	612-298-7259	cancnewman226@gmail.com
Dept Office	Jennifer Kelley	651-291-1800	jkelly@mnlegion.org

Provisions are made for the contestants to be accompanied by a chaperon at the Department, and National Contest Finals. One or both parents may chaperon the contestant. Meals, lodging and transportation costs are paid for both the contestant and chaperon at the Department and the National levels of competition.

**General Information:** The purpose of The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest is to develop a deeper 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 qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

**If you need any further assistance please contact one of the following:**

- 1 - District Chairman (names listed above)
- 2 - Sylvan Fix: 507-313-3376 • papafix1@gmail.com or  
Jennifer Kelley: 651-291-1800 • jkelley@mnlegion.org  
Toll Free: 866-259-9163