

"A Constitutional Speech Contest"

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop more profound knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of American citizenship's duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges. The program has featured numerous politicians and prominent contestants, including former presidential candidate Alan Keyes, national television commentator and talk radio host Lou Dobbs, and former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence.

Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$203,500 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets a \$25,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$22,500, and third gets \$20,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$2,000 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship. The American Legion's National Organization awards scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

High school students under age 20 are eligible. Competition begins at the post level and advances to a state competition. Legion department representatives certify one winner per state to the national contest, where department winners compete against each other in two speaking rounds. The contest caps off with a final round that decides the three top finishers.

Speaking subjects must be some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on citizens' duties and obligations to our government. Speeches are eight to 10 minutes long; three—to five-minute speeches on an assigned topic are also part of the contest.

Eligibility

Eligible participants must 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). The curriculum of the school must be considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade 9 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 American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department where they enter the competition. Contestants can enter the competition through only one department.

As Auxiliary Members, we can assist the American Legion with this program by serving as escorts, judges, timekeepers, and tabulators. Your Unit could also host a reception or luncheon for the contestants after the contest.

We need to encourage our junior members who are eligible. For more information, contact the following website: <https://www.legion.org>, search Oratorical Contest.

Ann Moore, Chairman

Southern Division Americanism