

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MAY 1, 2020 **FOR LOCAL AND NATIONAL CONTESTS**

Federal Court Civics Essay Contest

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, Knoxville and Greeneville Divisions, in partnership with the Knoxville and Greeneville Chapters of the Federal Bar Association, is sponsoring a local civics essay contest. Each year, the national Federal Bar Association (FBA) sponsors a civics essay contest, which is open to middle and high school students nationwide and, for 2020, provides six cash awards totaling \$4,500. The Knoxville and Greeneville divisions of the federal court and local chapters of the FBA want to encourage local students to participate in the national contest by offering cash awards for **high school students** who submit entries to both the national and local contests.

The local contest is open to public, private, and home high school students from Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, and Washington Counties. The topic for the national and local essay contests is the same, as detailed below: “The 19th Amendment Turns 100: Why is the Right to Vote Still Important?”

To enter the local contest, students must write an essay for submission to both the national and local contests, following the criteria and rules for the national contest (described in detail below). **Essay entries for the local contest must be submitted in either PDF, DOC, or DOCX format and must be accompanied by the attached submission form for receipt by 11:59 p.m. on ~~March 22, 2020~~ MAY 1, 2020, at the local contest email address, KXGVcivicsessay@gmail.com. (Please note that the national contest deadline is also ~~March 22, 2020~~ MAY 1, 2020; however, entries for the local and national contests must be submitted separately.)**

Prizes for the local contest will be awarded in at least the following amounts:

First Place: \$500

Second Place: \$300

Third Place: \$150

Winners of the local contest will be announced by **June 1, 2020**, and the winners, along with their parents and teachers, will be invited to a special reception with federal judges and members of the local chapters of the Federal Bar Association. The winning authors and entries will also be announced in a court press release and recognized on the federal court’s civics website and at meetings of the Knoxville and Greeneville chapters of the FBA.

Please spread the word and encourage your students to participate! If you have any questions, please contact KXGVcivicsessay@gmail.com.

NATIONAL FBA CIVICS ESSAY CONTEST [INSTRUCTIONS](#):

The 19th Amendment Turns 100: Why is the Right to Vote Still Important?

This year, the Federal Bar Association marks the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which was ratified on August 18, 1920. In 1869, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton created the National Woman Suffrage Association, whose members included Sojourner Truth and many others. These suffragettes sought to change the status quo and fight for women's right to vote. United States statutory and case law reflects the evolution of voting rights, including the following cases:

United States v. Anthony, 24 F. Cas. 829 (N.D.N.Y. 1873): In 1872, Susan B. Anthony and 14 other women cast their vote in the November presidential election in Rochester, New York. Anthony was indicted under the act of Congress of May 31, 1870, which made it an offense for a person to knowingly vote without having a lawful right to vote. Anthony was tried and convicted for her actions.

Minor v. Happersett, 88 U.S. 162 (1875): The issue before the United States Supreme Court was whether the 14th Amendment granted the right of suffrage on women despite the provision of the Constitution and laws of the state that granted the right of suffrage solely to men. The Court held "that the Constitution . . . does not confer the right of suffrage (right to vote) upon anyone, and that the constitutions and laws of the several States which commit that important trust to men alone are not necessarily void."

Fairchild v. Hughes, 258 U.S. 126 (1922): A private citizen of New York challenged the constitutionality of the 19th Amendment claiming that it would increase the costs of elections and "prevent ascertainment of the wishes" of the lawfully entitled male voters. The United States Supreme Court held that the citizen did not have standing to challenge the Amendment because he was not an elected official and the State of New York had ratified the Amendment.

Leser v. Garrett, 258 U.S. 130 (1922): The State of Maryland refused to ratify the 19th Amendment and sought to invalidate its authority over citizens in its state. The United States Supreme Court rejected this proposition for reasons including that the 19th Amendment was similar to the 15th Amendment, which had been "recognized and acted on for half a century."

Oregon v. Mitchell, 400 U.S. 112 (1970): For almost a century after the ratification of the 15th Amendment, discriminatory practices intended to discourage African Americans from voting were widespread throughout the United States. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was challenged in the United States Supreme Court when four states brought action challenging its constitutionality claiming Congress was usurping voting decisions reserved to the states.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the Federal Bar Association invites middle and high school students to consider why the right to vote is still important. Students should discuss the relevant cases, constitutional amendments, and statutes

cited above and address the historical challenges that certain groups have faced in asserting their voting rights.

Voting Rights Timeline:

1776: Only land-owning men could vote.

1848: Abolitionists and pro-women's suffrage groups first meet and organize in Seneca Falls.

1856: Vote granted to all white men by federal law though certain states made exceptions based on religion.

1868: 14th Amendment grants African Americans citizenship but not the right to vote.

1870: 15th Amendment prevents federal or state governments from denying the right to vote to citizens based on race.

1872: Activist Susan B. Anthony was arrested for trying to vote and activist Sojourner Truth was turned away at the polling place for trying to vote.

1890: Wyoming becomes the first state to grant women the right to vote (having allowed women to vote when Wyoming was a territory).

1920: 19th Amendment grants suffrage to women, but not all Native American and Asian women have citizenship.

1924: Indian Citizenship Act (Snyder Act) is passed, giving Native Americans full citizenship, but many states still disenfranchise them at the polls.

1952: McCarran-Walter Act grants all Asian-Americans the right to citizenship and to vote.

1965: Congress passes the Voting Rights Act, removing discriminatory barriers that kept many people of color from voting.

1961: 23rd Amendment gives District of Columbia residents the right to vote for presidents but does not provide Congressional representation.

1971: 26th Amendment passed in light of Vietnam War to address those who were "old enough to fight, [were] old enough to vote."

1993: National Voter Registration Act is passed, making it easier to register at the state departments of motor vehicles and public assistance centers.

2000: A federal court held that the United States Constitution does not confer upon United States citizens residing in Puerto Rico a right to participate in the national election for President and Vice-President.

Who May Enter

The national contest is open to middle and high school students enrolled in public, private, parochial and charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status in the United States and its Territories. Middle school students are defined as those in grades 6-8. High school students are those in grades 9-12.

The local contest of the Knoxville and Greeneville court divisions of the Eastern District of Tennessee is open only to high school students (grades 9-12) enrolled in public, private, parochial and charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status in the following counties: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, and Washington.

Essay Length and Format

National Contest:

The maximum essay length in the Middle School Division is 500 words, and the maximum length is 1,000 words for high school entries. While not required, proper use of endnote citations and bibliographies will be credited during judging but are not included in the word count. Essays must be submitted as a Microsoft Word or PDF file and follow these formatting guidelines:

- Use 12 pt. Cambria or Times New Roman font, double-spaced text, with one-inch margins
- DO NOT include a title page, page headers or footers, or page numbers
- Include your name on the first page only
- Place all in-text, numbered citations at the end of your essay as endnotes, followed by a bibliography (if included)

Knoxville & Greeneville Division, Eastern District of Tennessee Contest:

Essay entries for the local contest must be submitted in either PDF, DOC, or DOCX format and must be accompanied by the attached submission form for receipt by 11:59 p.m. on ~~March 22, 2020~~ **MAY 1, 2020**, at the local contest email address, KXGVcivicsessay@gmail.com. (Please note that the national contest deadline is also ~~March 22, 2020~~ **MAY 1, 2020**; however, entries for the local and national contests must be submitted separately.)

Entry Submissions and Deadline

National Contest:

Entries in the national contest must be submitted with a completed entry form, available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/VWGRLYP. Entries will be accepted from January 31, 2020, through 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on ~~March 22, 2020~~ **MAY 1, 2020**. Winners of the national contest will be notified no later than **June 1**, 2020.

Knoxville & Greeneville Division, Eastern District of Tennessee Contest:

Entries in the local contest must be identical to the entry submitted for the national contest and submitted with the entry form (enclosed with this packet and available on the Court's website) to the local contest email at KXGVcivicsessay@gmail.com.

Judging

Essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of constitutional principles – 40 points
- Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme – 30 points
- Grammar, spelling and composition – 25 points
- Use of footnotes, bibliographies – 5 points

Prizes

National Contest:

Middle School Division: First place, \$750; Second place, \$500; Third place, \$250

High School Division: First place: \$1,500; Second place: \$1,000; Third place, \$500

Knoxville & Greeneville Division, Eastern District of Tennessee Contest:

First place: \$500; Second place: \$300; Third place: \$150

Release Forms

If you become a finalist in the contest, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the Federal Bar Association and/or the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, at its option, to publish your essay on its website and in print publications. In addition, contest winners will be required to provide and authorize use of photographs of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

Copyright

Adherence to all copyright laws and fair use practices is required.

Disqualification

Reasons for disqualification include: incomplete or improperly formatted entries, off-topic essays, providing false information, committing plagiarism, not meeting the submission deadline, and not providing a release form if requested.

**2020 Eastern District of Tennessee – Federal Bar Association Civics Essay Contest
Knoxville & Greeneville Divisions
Entry Form**

Name of student: _____

Address of student: _____

Email address of student: _____

Phone number of student: _____

Name of parent/guardian of student: _____

Email address of parent/guardian: _____

Phone number of parent/guardian: _____

Name of high school attending: _____

Grade: _____

Name of sponsoring teacher: _____

Address of high school: _____

Email address of sponsoring teacher: _____

Phone number of sponsoring teacher: _____

Please confirm ALL of the following by placing your initials in each blank:

_____ I followed applicable copyright laws and fair use practices.

_____ My essay is 1,000 words or less.

_____ I am a student enrolled in a public, private, parochial, charter, or home high school.

_____ I have submitted this essay in identical form to the national Federal Bar Association civics essay contest.

Please sign (electronic signature allowed): _____