

The American Legion Essay Committee

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**“WHY IS THE 1ST
AMENDMENT IMPORTANT
IN AMERICA?”**

2024

PENNSYLVANIA

AMERICAN LEGION

89th ANNUAL

ESSAY CONTEST

FOR GRADES 9-12

**The American Legion
Department of Pennsylvania
PO Box 2324
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2324
(717) 730-9100
www.pa-legion.com**

As American Legionnaires, we fully believe that education is the cornerstone upon which the future of America is built. Education becomes the first requisite of good citizenship and the relationship of The American Legion to Pennsylvania citizens is of prime importance as a means of keeping us a free civilization.

Our approach to supporting solid educational principles is direct and positive. We agree with the current PA Department of Education initiative of “writing across the curriculum” and reward the efforts of involved students through our annual essay scholarship program.

Through the annual Department of Pennsylvania American Legion Essay scholarship contest, students are provided an opportunity to show case their talents and abilities in English by using originality, accuracy and research as evidence, while learning that the responsibilities and duties of good citizenship can be both rewarding and fun.

Since the inception of the Department of Pennsylvania state Essay Contest in 1935, The American Legion has awarded well over \$500,000 in scholarships, while local American Legion Posts, counties, Districts and Sections have also offered suitable awards and prizes for their respective best essay winners as well.

For more information on participating in the Department of Pennsylvania's American Legion Essay Contest, visit <https://pa-legion.com/programs/student-and-youth/essay-program/>

POSTS
If HAVE county representation please Call your County Commander for the winner to move to the next level. (As listed in the current American Legion Directory).

If NO county representation please Call your District Essay Chairperson for the winner to move to the next level. (As listed in the current American Legion Directory).

If anyone has any questions or concerns about rules or procedures PLEASE Call the Essay Chairman or another Committee member listed above.

2024 ESSAY CONTEST RULES & REGULATIONS
“WHY IS THE 1ST AMENDMENT IMPORTANT IN AMERICA?”

Any student enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in a public, private or parochial, cyber school or who is home schooled in Pennsylvania is eligible to participate.

Students **MUST** prepare essays without assistance and provide a statement to that effect on the last page. (See winning essay's sample)

All essays **MUST** have a **COVER PAGE** containing the following:

- The Essay Title (As stated above **WITH NO CHANGES**),
- Student's Name, address, telephone, & email address (if applicable),
- School Name and Address if applicable,
- Teacher's verification of Student's Grade Level,
- Sponsoring American Legion Post Number & address,
- Parent or guardian's name, address and phone number,
- Student's signature.

ALL essays (typewritten preferred but not required) **MUST** be no less than 500 words and no more than 1,000 words.

The title **MUST** appear on all pages of the essay as well as the cover page.

Essays shall be judged on the following:

- **Proper English structure.**
- **Accuracy.**
- **Extent of information.**
- **Originality** - Any material not original must be cited in a bibliography for the information of the judges, stating publication, volume, page, date, publisher and author. Anything cited from the internet must include a verifiable internet address such as: <http://pa-legion.com/aboutour-history/>

- No reference shall be made, for or against, any political candidate or political party affiliation.

DEADLINE DATES:

1. **BEFORE JANUARY 9, 2024** - STUDENTS must submit their Essays to a **LOCAL AMERICAN LEGION POST**. Each high school may select one (1) winner for each American Legion Post in their school district. To locate a post near you, go to www.legion.org & click on find a local post and enter your zip code.

2. **BEFORE JANUARY 20, 2024** - The American Legion Posts shall have selected and forwarded their winning essays to their **COUNTY Essay Chairperson**.

3. **BEFORE FEBRUARY 6, 2024** - **COUNTIES** shall have forwarded their winning essays to their appropriate **DISTRICT Essay Chairperson** (as listed in the current American Legion Directory).

4. **BEFORE FEBRUARY 27, 2024** - **DISTRICTS** shall have forwarded their winning essays to their **SECTIONAL Essay Vice Chairperson**.

5. **BEFORE MARCH 13, 2024** - each **SECTION** (East, Central, West) shall have selected and forwarded their winning essay to the Department Essay Chairperson.

6. The Department of Pennsylvania's Essay Program's top three winners will have been judged and selected by **MARCH 27, 2024**.

The Department of Pennsylvania will award the following prizes to those top three (3) winning Essays.

- **First Place Winner** will be awarded a **\$3,500**, a plaque and a trip to the **PA American Legion Convention in July** to read the winning essay to the assembled delegates.
- **The Second Place Winner** will receive **\$3,000** and a plaque.
- **The Third Place Winner** will receive **\$2,500** and a plaque.