What does access to justice mean to you and how do the Constitution and Bill of Rights enable this access?

2017 Fourth Circuit Essay Contest

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit is pleased to announce an essay contest for high school students in the five states within the circuit. The contest offers students an opportunity to learn about the Constitution and Bill of Rights and a chance to win cash prizes.

In announcing the contest, the Honorable Roger L. Gregory, Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, stated, "As long as we remain focused on promoting young citizens' understanding of the Constitution, it will remain a powerful instrument for ensuring the stability of our government and the liberty of the governed."

The theme, *Access to Justice*, asks students to consider and share their thoughts on the question: What does access to justice mean to you and how do the Constitution and Bill of Rights enable this access?

Additional Information

Visit www.ca4.uscourts.gov/students/essay-contest.
Contact (804) 916-2706 or essaycontest@ca4.uscourts.gov.

First Prize	**$2,000**
Second Prize	**$1,500**
Third Prize	**$1,000**

Contest Rules & Entry Form

1 Who May Enter

The essay contest is open to high school students (grades 9 through 12) in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. **Note:** Children, grandchildren, stepchildren, and members of the household of a federal judge or federal judiciary employee are excluded from the competition.

2 Essay Question

What does access to justice mean to you and how do the Constitution and Bill of Rights enable this access?

3 Length & Format

Essays are limited to **1,000 words**, excluding footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies. Footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies are not required but will be credited during judging. Submit your essay in Microsoft WORD or Adobe Acrobat PDF format. **Do not include your name on your essay.** Include your name **only** on your entry form.

4 Contest Entry Form

Complete and save the entry form for submission as a separate PDF document: www.ca4.uscourts.gov/docs/pdfs/EntryForm.pdf.

5 Submission Deadline

Submit your essay and entry form as separate attachments to an email addressed to essaycontest@ca4.uscourts.gov by 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, June 16, 2017**.

6 Judging

Judging and scoring will be based on the following criteria: understanding of constitutional principles (35 points); clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme (30 points); originality (15 points); grammar, spelling, and composition (15 points); and use of footnotes, endnotes, or bibliography (5 points). Not meeting the submission deadline, providing false entry information, and plagiarizing content are grounds for disqualification.

7 Awards

Awards will be announced in August and presented at a Constitution Day Event in September 2017. Winners will be asked to submit a picture and release form allowing the Fourth Circuit to publish their essays on court websites and at public events.