



2022 Fourth Circuit Essay Contest

Fifty years ago, on March 22, 1972, Congress sent the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the states for ratification, but only 35 of the 38 required states voted to ratify by the deadline.

Is the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause sufficient to secure the rights of all citizens, or is the ERA necessary to protect gender equality?

Who May Enter

The essay contest is open to all students currently in grades 9 through 12 from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Note: Prior award winners as well as children, grandchildren, stepchildren, and members of the household of a federal judge or federal judiciary employee are excluded from the competition.

Length & Format

Essays are limited to **1,000 words**. Citations should be placed in footnotes, endnotes, or bibliographies and excluded from the word count. Submit your essay as a Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF document. Do not include your name on your essay.

Submission Deadline

Your essay and contest entry form must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on **Friday, May 27, 2022**. Go to www.ca4.uscourts.gov/essay-contest to complete the contest entry form and for instructions on submitting your essay.

Judging

- Understanding of constitutional principles (40 points)
- Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme (35 points)
- Grammar, spelling, and composition (25 points)

Exceeding the word limit, missing the submission deadline, plagiarizing content, providing false entry information, and not adhering to the rules are grounds for disqualification.

Awards

Winners will be announced in August, and the winning essays will be presented at the court's Essay Awards Program in September 2022.

First Place
\$2,000

Second Place
\$1,500

Third Place
\$1,000

Questions

Contact the Fourth Circuit Clerk's Office at (804) 916-2706 or essaycontest@ca4.uscourts.gov.



www.ca4.uscourts.gov/essay-contest