



THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



“A Constitutional Speech Contest”

Official Department of Tennessee 2023 Rules

Lanny Culver – Department Commander

Terry Ward – Department Oratorical Chairman,
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**DEADLINE FOR CONTESTANTS' APPLICATIONS
TO THE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS:
JANUARY 17TH , 2023. WE WILL NOT EXTEND
THE APPLICATION DATE.**

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

NATIONAL CONTEST

Winner \$25,000

First Runner-up \$22,500

Second Runner-up \$20,000

STATE CONTEST

Winner \$3,000

First Runner-up \$2,000

Second Runner-up \$1,000

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest” is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship.

Scholarships are awarded by the American Legion of Tennessee and in cooperation with the National American Legion organization. Winners may use their scholarship to attend any accredited college or university, junior colleges or vocational trade school within the United States following graduation from high school, unless by service in the Armed Forces, and granted an extension of eligibility.

CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

Eligible participants in the contest 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 state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of said high school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade

nine and terminating with grade 12. High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest. Contestants must be either legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within Tennessee. Contestants can enter competition in only one department (state). The three finalists of the national contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

A school official must certify the Oratorical Contestant and send the enclosed certification form to the Oratorical Contest Chairman at the following address: The American Legion, Department of Tennessee, 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, Tennessee 37214 by **January 17, 2023**.

OVERVIEW

Students are expected to present two timed oral speeches, titled the Prepared and the Assigned, to an audience of Legion members, parents, and oratorical speech judges.

PREPARED ORATION

The prepared oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest.

The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight (8) minutes or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be in electronic or paper form. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest, at which time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room.

ASSIGNED TOPIC

The assigned topic oration must not take less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. (See page 4)

The assigned topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his/her prepared oration and will be made

known to the audience and each contestant approximately five minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States, as listed under assigned topics for the current year's contest in this brochure. No foreign languages or songs.

All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. The vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in the English language.

Singing of a song in any language is not permitted and will result in the immediate disqualification of the contestant.

The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made. In the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

SCHOLARSHIPS

At the National level, Scholarship awards to the three finalists in the final round of the national contest are as follows: 1st place: \$25,000; 2nd place: \$22,500; 3rd place: \$20,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the first round of the national contest will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Payments of scholarships are made directly to the registrar's office at the institution where the student is accepted.

Each first round winner who advances to and participates in the second round, but does not advance to the final round, will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship.

The national organization of The American Legion awards scholarships to the three finalists, department winners, and first round winners who are eliminated during the second round of competition. A contestant must give both his or her prepared oration and the assigned topic presentation to receive a scholarship. In addition to the scholarships awarded by the national organization, there are several hundred scholarships awarded at the discretion of intermediate organizations, to participants at post, district or county, and department levels of competition as described in this bulletin. (See page 4)

CONTEST REGULATIONS

A random drawing shall be held by the official in charge of the contest to determine the order in which the contestants will appear. The contest chairman shall announce the title of the contestant's prepared oration immediately after introducing him/her as contestant No. 1, contestant No. 2, etc. The chairman will request the audience to refrain from applause until the judges have made their decision.

A raised platform is not compulsory; however, it is strongly recommended. **The use of notes, amplification, lectern, or**

speaker's stand by contestants, or prompting in any manner, is not permitted. Props are not permitted.

WHAT TO WEAR

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE CONTESTS

At the Department (state) contestants shall conform to National contest procedures, rules, and regulations.

If the American Legion Department of Tennessee were to certify a winner to the National Americanism Division of The American Legion and the Department did not conduct its final competition in conformity with the rules and regulations as set forth herein, in the judgment of the director of the Americanism Division or the director's representative, the winner will be disqualified from competition in the national contest.

The Department of Tennessee may certify one contestant into the national contest. If for any reason the state winner is unable to compete in the national contest, the department first runner-up may be substituted following approval by The American Legion's National Americanism Commission. A department first runner-up accepted into national competition will be entitled to all national awards, entitlements, and compensation that the department winner would have received had he/she participated at that level.

POST/SCHOOL CONTEST

Posts with more than one applicant should conduct qualification contests before the District competition is held, between December 17, 2022, and January 14, 2023. **The 2023 Department Oratorical Application for each student is due at Department Headquarters by January 17, 2023.** An online link to the Department's Oratorical application for 2023 can be found at: http://www.tennesseelegion.org/files/Contestant_Application_and_Certification_2023.pdf

DISTRICT

District Chairmen will conduct a District Oratorical Contest within their respective Districts during the period of **January 21 through January 28, 2023**. Upon completion the District Chairmen will certify the contest winner and subsequent runners-up to Department Headquarters. District Chairmen may elect to conduct a District Semi-Final Contest within a District if there are many contestants. The Semi-final Contests as well as the final District Contests must be held between the dates provided. In the event of severe weather, the District Chairmen may reschedule the contest as long as the contest remains within the specified period. The District winner competes in the Division contest. If the winner cannot compete, the first runner-up replaces the winner. All contestants participating in a District contest, and not advancing to the Division contest, receive a \$25 award check.

DIVISION

A Division contest will be conducted in the three divisions of the state **February 11-18, 2023**. The Division Chairman will certify the winner to Department Headquarters upon contest completion. Division winners compete in the State Contest. (Locations to be announced) Division winners not advancing to the State final, but participating in the Division contest receive a \$100 award check. All checks are mailed after the state contest to the home of the contestant.

DEPARTMENT (STATE)

The Department Contest is scheduled for **March 4, 2023**, starting at 10:00 am, the American Legion Headquarters for the state at 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN. The winner of the State contest competes for the state at the National Contest, scheduled for April 21- 23, 2023, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The three finalists in the State contest receive scholarships to attend any post-secondary educational institution in the United States for advanced education at accredited colleges, universities, or vocational schools.

Scholarship awardees will have one year after high school graduation to apply for the scholarship funds. If application is not made in writing to the American Legion Department of Tennessee, 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, TN 37214 within one year, the scholarship funds revert to the oratorical account. Any scholarship awardee entering active military service within the one-year grace period will retain their scholarship, providing the awardee notifies The American Legion Department of Tennessee, in writing, of their entry into service. Upon entry into the military service, the awardee needs to advise The American Legion Department of Tennessee of their address annually. If awardee does not apply within five years of the date of entering active military service, the scholarship funds will revert to the oratorical account.

HIGH SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

Please make your contestants aware of the January 17, 2023, Contest Certification deadline as well as contest dates so they have sufficient time to prepare their orations. Again, a School Officer must sign the enclosed Official Certification form confirming contestants' enrollment in school. Students will compete within their District.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

The national organization of The American Legion will pay the travel and lodging expenses of each department winner and one chaperone to the national contest. **All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age, preferably a parent of the contestant.**

The national organization of The American Legion shall not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en route to or from the contest; however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants certified into the national competition.

Contestants will travel by an air carrier selected by the national organization of The American Legion or personal automobile if previously approved by the national organization of The American Legion.

JUDGES

The judges are an integral part of the Oratorical Contest. Their qualifications are considered carefully as the decision of the judges is final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and success of the program which results in the selection of a national champion. All department finals and the national contest must use five judges. No publicity shall be given to the names of the judges in advance of the contest. During the contest, the judges will be seated in different locations in the auditorium and each judge shall render his or her final decision without consultation with other judges or any other person.

Judges will be advised that a lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government must result in their downgrading the contestant. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of 10 points for failure to speak about the Constitution. The contest chairman will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

The judges, timekeepers, tabulators and the contest chairman, following the last assigned topic discourse, may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation. The decision of the judges is final.

TIMEKEEPERS

Official timekeepers maintain an accurate time record of each contestant's efforts. Timekeepers are in full view of the contestants. The timekeepers begin timing each contestant at the start of the prepared oration. The timekeepers are to be equipped with a stopwatch and time placards of specific time remaining for the presentation.

TABULATORS

The contest chairmen will appoint no less than three tabulators for the department finals contest. It will be their responsibility to review the judges' scorecards to be certain they are fully tabulated and signed before they are submitted for final tabulation.

Judges' scorecards for department finals and the national contest will not be divulged to anyone at the site of the contest.

The judges' scorecards become the property of The American Legion National Headquarters.

TV AND RADIO

Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests as well as taping or other types of media for later showing, provided: 1) the lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants; 2) the taping or broadcasts shall in no way distract the contestants or interfere with the announced scheduled time of the contest; 3) the normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium; and 4) The American Legion is in no way financially obligated without its prior approval.

GENERAL RULES

Contestants are required to remain in a separate room, where the discourse of the other speakers cannot be heard, until it is their turn to speak (contestants will be under the supervision of an individual appointed by the contest chairman). As the contestants conclude their prepared orations, they must return to a separate holding room. As each speaker concludes his or her assigned topic discourse, they will not be allowed to associate with contestants who have not fulfilled the assigned topic requirement.

Approximately five minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the assigned topic discourse, contestant No. 1 will be informed of the topic drawn for the assigned topic and shall be permitted to retire to privacy under the direction of an individual appointed by the contest chairman, whose duty it shall be to see that no contestant is permitted to consult any text matter or notes having any connection with the subject matter upon which he/she is to speak, other than the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn.

Each succeeding contestant will be called upon in the order in which she/he previously appeared. She/he shall also, in turn, be informed of the topic of the assigned topic discourse and shall then be escorted to privacy in the manner as provided for all contestants.

ASSIGNED TOPICS FOR 2023

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Amendment XIV, Section 1

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Amendment XVI

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

NATIONAL FINALS CONTEST

The national finals contest will be held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel **April 21-23, 2023**, in Indianapolis. Quarterfinal and semifinal rounds are scheduled for Saturday, April 22. The championship is scheduled for Sunday, April 23. Please note the following mandatory requirements:

- All contestants and chaperones must arrive on Friday, April 21. Contestants are lodged at a hotel to be determined in Indianapolis and arranged through the national office.
- A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants is scheduled for the evening of Friday, April 21.
- A banquet honoring all contestants is scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, April 23. Contestants and chaperones are asked to depart for home after the banquet.

The 2023 Oratorical application can be found on the Department's website at http://www.tennesseelegion.org/files/Contestant_Application_and_Certification_2023.pdf

For further information about the American Legion Department of Tennessee's Oratorical Contest Contact State Chairman Terry Ward, 615-519-6523 or email tswardpost281am@gmail.com



THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL

Oratorical Scholarship

An eight to ten-minute oration could earn
you a **\$25,000** scholarship.

For over 80 years, The American Legion has sponsored a speech contest for high school students grades 9 through 12. The Legionnaires of Tennessee award a \$3,000 scholarship to the state winner. \$6,000 is awarded to the top three students at the state contest. The winning Tennessee contestant also receives expenses for themselves and a chaperone to the National Finals in Indianapolis, Indiana in April 2023, and a shot at the 1st Place grand prize.

National Awards



A total of \$203,500 is awarded annually by The American Legion.

The American Legion is a non-profit veterans' organization that was chartered by Congress in 1919.



To learn more, send an email to : tswardpost281am@gmail.com

An information pamphlet with rules and internet links will be emailed to you.

THE AMERICAN LEGION



DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE

2023 ORATORICAL CONTEST APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATION BY SCHOOL OFFICIAL

PLEASE SEND APPLICATION/CERTIFICATION TO
THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE
ATTN: ORATORICAL PROGRAM

318 DONELSON PIKE BY JANUARY 17th, 2023 (SORRY, WE CANNOT ACCEPT LATE
SUBMISSIONS) NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214

High School Information

School's Name and
Address

School's
Phone #

Student's Information

Student's Name:

Current Grade:

9th

10th

11th

12th

Student is a Citizen of the United States:

Yes

No

Home Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Student's Phone #

Student's Email

Name of Parent or Parents

Father

Mother

Address

Address

Father's Phone #

Mother's Phone #

Father's Email

Mother's Email

Name of Teacher and/or Coach

Teacher or Coach

Address

Phone #

American Legion Post Information

American Legion Post
#

Post Officer's Name:

Parent Signature(s)

Parent's Printed
Name

School Official's
Signature

School Official's
Printed Name & Title