

2023 Student Essay Contest

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

One hundred years ago, the Supreme Court's decision in *Meyer v. Nebraska* declared that a state law prohibiting teachers from teaching grade school children any language other than English violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause. In 1968, the Supreme Court declared in *Epperson v. Arkansas* that a state law forbidding the teaching of evolution in public schools, colleges, and universities violated the First Amendment.

In light of *Meyer* and later cases, may a state, consistent with the protections afforded by the First and Fourteenth Amendments, prohibit the teaching of certain subjects?

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 attached to your email, not a link. 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 **Wednesday, May 31, 2023**. 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, using AI-generated content, 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 2023.

Questions

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

1ST PLACE

\$2,000

2ND PLACE

\$1,500

3RD PLACE

\$1,000



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