



# THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST

## 2016 - 2017 RULES & REGULATIONS

### “A Constitutional Speech Contest”

An Americanism Program  
of  
The American Legion  
Department of Indiana



Approved by  
The Indiana Department of  
Public Instruction  
and  
The National Association of  
Secondary School Principals

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of The American Legion State Oratorical Contest are to:

- develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States on the part of Indiana high school students;
- give each participating student an opportunity to utilize this knowledge in an atmosphere of competitive public speaking; and
- offer students an avenue to obtain scholarship awards to assist them in pursuing a college education.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

The American Legion State Oratorical Contest is open to any student who is enrolled in classes equivalent to the regular 9th, 10th, 11<sup>th</sup>, or 12th grades. All students must be under twenty (20) years of age. All students must be enrolled in an Indiana high school during any and all levels of participation in this contest. All contestants must be a citizen of or lawful permanent resident of the United States. Students may only enter one District/Zone/State competition.

The student must compete in the District in which his/her sponsoring Post is located.

## **RULES**

1. The subject to be used in the Oratorical Contest must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States which will give emphasis to the duties and obligations of a citizen of our Government.
2. At the Zone level and State finals of oratorical competition, a contestant will be required to deliver an 8-10 minute prepared oration and a 3-5 minute assigned topic oration. The assigned topic portion of the oratorical contest will not be required at the District level of competition only.
3. The prepared oration must be an original work of the contestant's own efforts. Plagiarism will be grounds for disqualification by contest judges.
4. The subject of the assigned topic will be chosen from a field of topics of the United States Constitution, the areas of which are outlined in this packet. This group of assigned topics will be drawn from at those levels of competition where an assigned topic oration is required.
5. At any oratorical contest, only one assigned topic will be drawn from the field and each contestant will speak on the same chosen topic. Five (5) minutes will be allowed to each contestant for preparation.

6. A contestant will not be allowed the use of a podium, amplification equipment, props, prompting, or notes during his or her oration. This applies to both the prepared and assigned topic portions of the contest.
7. In the delivery of both a prepared and assigned topic oration, quotations must be indicated as such. For quotations which are more than ten words in length, the author's name must be given.
8. Penalty points will be assessed for orations which finish over or under the time limit allowed, or for those orations judged as not relating to the United States Constitution.

## **JUDGING**

The judging of a contestant in any level of oratorical competition will be done by a panel of selected judges, to be no less than three, who are selected from fields of public speaking, education, law, media, and other degreed professionals.

The contestants are judged in a number of areas related to an oration, such as logic, knowledge of the subject matter, voice, style, diction, etc.

## **CONDUCT OF CONTEST**

At any level of oratorical competition within the state of Indiana, the contest is under the supervision of a contest chairman, who has the responsibility of seeing that the contest is held in accordance with The American Legion State and National oratorical rules.

At any level of oratorical competition in the interest of fairness, the contestants are never allowed to hear the other contestants' orations. The contestants deliver their oration one at a time while the other contestants are being held in a sound proof or isolated room away from the contest stage.

So that a speaker may know the length of the oration while it is being delivered, timekeepers will hold up cards during the prepared oration after 8, 9, and 10 minutes have elapsed. During the assigned topic portion, cards will be held up after 3, 4, and 5 minutes have elapsed.

## **COMPETITION LEVELS**

The American Legion Oratorical Contest consists of a series of competitive levels. They are:

1. District Contest – will determine the representative to advance to the next level of competition;
2. Zone Contest – will determine the four State finalists; and
3. State Contest – will determine the State Oratorical Champion. This contestant will automatically advance into National American Legion competition, leading to The American Legion National Oratorical Championship and a chance for up to \$19,500 in scholarships.

## **CONTEST AWARDS**

Zone contestants receive a \$200 scholarship, with the exception of the winners of the four Zone contests, who will receive an \$800 scholarship. The three State finalists each receive a \$1,000 scholarship and plaque, in addition to his or her Zone scholarships. The State Champion receives a \$3,400 scholarship and plaque, in addition to his or her Zone scholarships. NOTE: In order to receive his or her scholarship money, the contestant must compete as far as he or she can through the State and National competition.

## **DATES**

The dates for District and Zone contests vary, but are generally held in January and February, respectively. American Legion Posts will provide that information to the contestants they sponsor. However: The **State** finals will be held at 1 p.m. on Sunday, **March 5, 2017**, at the National Headquarters of The American Legion located at 700 North Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, IN 46206. The **National** finals will be held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel the weekend of **April 21 – 23, 2017**.

## **CERTIFICATION**

If a school wishes to enter a contestant in The American Legion State Oratorical Contest, school officials must fill out and sign the “Certification of High School Representative” form included in this packet.

## **CONTEST DEADLINES**

The contest certification form must be received at The American Legion State Headquarters no later than **December 16, 2016**. Any entries received after the deadline will not be allowed to compete in the contest, NO EXCEPTIONS!

## **ASSIGNED TOPICS FOR 2017 ORATORICAL CONTEST**

### **Amendment 7**

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

### **Amendment 10**

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 16**

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.

### **Amendment 17**

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, that the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

**THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA  
ORATORICAL CONTEST CERTIFICATION FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: \_\_\_\_\_

POST SPONSOR: # \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT: # \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL GRADE (9, 10, 11, 12): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND ADDRESS OF HIGH SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CERTIFICATION SIGNATURES**

PRINCIPAL: \_\_\_\_\_

FACULTY SPONSOR: \_\_\_\_\_

POST SPONSOR: \_\_\_\_\_

(Post: Number of participants in school contest = \_\_\_\_\_)

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**THIS APPLICATION MUST BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY AND MAILED TO:**

The American Legion, Department of Indiana  
ATTN: Oratorical Contest  
5440 Herbert Lord Road  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46216

(NOTE: This application form may also be completed and printed online at [www.indianalegion.org](http://www.indianalegion.org). Select the "PROGRAMS" tab, then "Oratorical".)

**CERTIFICATION DEADLINE IS: DECEMBER 16, 2016**