

# AMERICAN LEGION Department of ILLINOIS



## 88TH ANNUAL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST

### A Scholarship Opportunity

For students seeking an academic challenge and an opportunity to earn college scholarship money, the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is a natural fit. For more than 80 years, this constitutional speech contest has educated youth on our nation's founding document, with an emphasis on citizenship.

The main purpose of the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution among students. Participants also grow in leadership ability, their capacity to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and understanding of the rights, responsibilities, obligations and privileges of U.S. citizens.

### \$11,700 in Scholarships

Scholarships awarded may be used to attend any college/university, junior college or vocational educational institution within the United States. They must be used within 4 years from high school graduation (unless interrupted by service in the Armed Forces). Funds for scholarships are provided by department membership dues.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AMERICAN LEGION CONTACT TODAY! (LISTED BELOW)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## RULES & REGULATIONS

### SUBJECT TO BE USED FOR PREPARED ORATION

The subject to be used for the prepared oration in the Oratorical Contest must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution with emphasis on a citizen's duties and obligations 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) or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery. The penalty for plagiarism will be disqualification. It must bear a title which is to be announced by the contest Moderator when he or she introduces the contestant; i.e.: "Contestant No. 1, the title of their oration is", etc.

In the prepared oration and/or assigned topic, quotations must always be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than ten words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally. It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases in a foreign language to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. It should be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in English. Singing is not permitted and will result in immediate disqualification. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song(s) provided proper attribution is made. A raised platform is not mandatory; however, it is strongly recommended. The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand or any manner of prompting is not permitted. Props are not permitted. For a full review of Oratorical Contest Rules and Regulations go to: <http://www.legion.org/oratorical/rules>

## CONTESTANT CERTIFICATION

Each of the (5) five Divisions may have up to one (1)\* contestant compete at the Department of Illinois Oratorical Contest that is scheduled for February 28 through March 1, 2025. \*Divisions may have and are limited to NOT MORE than (2) two Alternates.

The Oratorical Application, Communication Agreement and a sponsor check in the amount of **\$175 for each contestant** must be sent to the respective Division Americanism Chairman **no later than January 17, 2025**. It is highly recommended that either the Post, County, or District host a contest. **The Division level is required to host a CONTEST or at minimum a detailed contest ORIENTATION with contestants ensuring they are prepared for the next level of competition.**

## CONTESTANT ELIGIBILITY

All contestants must be Lawful Permanent Residents of the United States of America and bona fide students in secondary schools (Public, Parochial, Military, Private and Home Schools) under the age of 20 years on the date of the National Finals Program whose academic curriculum is of Public High School level, and enrolled in classes equivalent to the regular 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades on January 1 of the year when such National Programs are conducted.

The assigned topic discourse must not consume 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.

The full text for the assigned topic, will be made known to each contestant approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the U.S. Constitution, selected from Articles and Sections as listed under assigned topics for this year's contest in this brochure.

## 2025 ASSIGNED TOPICS

By action of the National Americanism Commission, the Assigned Topics shall be used in ALL 2025 contests. They are as follows:

**Amendment 1** - Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**Amendment VII** - 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 XVIII

**Section 1.** After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

**Section 2.** The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**Section 3.** This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

**Amendment XXVI - Section 1.** The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

**Section 2.** The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.[3]

## SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

### DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS SCHOLARSHIPS

#### Semi-finals (Division Level Contest)

1st Place at Division.....advances to Department final contest.  
 2nd Place.....Receives a \$500 scholarship  
 3rd Place.....Receives a \$200 scholarship  
 4th\* Place.....Receives a \$150 scholarship  
 5th\* Place.....Receives a \$150 scholarship

\*Divisions wishing to award 6 scholarships can reduce the 4th and 5th place scholarship to \$100 to award a 6th place \$100 scholarship.

#### Finals

1st Place.....Receives a \$2000 scholarship  
 2nd Place.....Receives a \$1500 scholarship  
 3rd Place.....Receives a \$1200 scholarship  
 4th Place.....Receives a \$1000 scholarship  
 5th Place.....Receives a \$1000 scholarship

### NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

1st Place.....\$25,000.00  
 2nd Place.....\$22,500.00  
 3rd Place.....\$20,000.00

First Round Contestants will receive a \$2,000.00 scholarship and each Second Round Contestant who does not proceed to the National Finals will receive a \$2,000.00 scholarship.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION and DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS FORMS: [WWW.ILLEGION.ORG](http://WWW.ILLEGION.ORG)

## 2024 AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF ILLINOIS ORATORICAL CONTEST WINNER APRIL ZHANG OF NAPERVILLE, IL A STUDENT OF NEUQUA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Pictured below (from left to right) are 2024 Finalists Samuel Maue, Harshee Shaw, April Zhang (1st place; advanced to Nationals for second consecutive year), and Samantha Findysz.

visit <https://www.illegion.org/programs-services/americanism-commission/> for a full list of previous Department of Illinois Scholarship winners.



**AMERICANISM COMMISSION:**  
 Chairman: Micheal M. Carder  
 Vice Chairman: Celeste Latham  
 Chairman Emeritas: Philip H. Mette

#### Members by Division:

1st Division - Micheal M. Carder  
 2nd Division - Celeste N. Latham  
 3rd Division - Norman W. Flowers, Jr.  
 4th Division - Mark Young  
 5th Division - Ralph W. Rounds, II  
 5th Division - Phil Mette

#### NATIONAL SEMI FINAL OR FINALS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS FROM ILLINOIS

1943 BURTON BERNARD, GRANITE CITY  
 1959 ROGER R. MAJAK, LANSING  
 1973 JOHN WESLEY FROST, PEORIA  
 1975 GRETCHEN WINTER, CHICAGO  
 1977 MARK R. THOMPSON, GLENN ELLYN  
 1982 WILLIAM KEPHART, JR., CHILLICOTHE  
 2004 JACQUELINE KEIDEL, BERWYN  
 2005 JOSHUA WILSON, GRIDLEY  
 2007 JARED CANFIELD, NAPERVILLE  
 2009 HEIDI ERBSEN, PEARL CITY  
 2012 ATHENA SALDANHA, SCHUAMBURG  
 2015 ROWAN MACWAN, NAPERVILLE  
 2019 CALEB MAUE, HOMER GLEN