

Schuylkill Chamber to Host National Civics Bee Regional Competition Featuring Top Student Finalists

SCHUYLKILL HAVEN, PA – The Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, will host the National Civics Bee® Regional Competition on Thursday, April 9 at Penn State Schuylkill. The event will bring together the top 20 student finalists from across Schuylkill County for a live, in-person academic competition focused on civics knowledge and community engagement.

“The Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce is extremely proud to be one of nine sites in Pennsylvania, selected to host the U.S. Chamber Foundation National Civics Bee®, now in our second year. We have been gratified how our regional students have been inspired by this annual competition to engage in civics and contribute to their communities. This year’s initiative to enhance civic literacy, skills, and participation resulted in 352 essays submitted, ranking our Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce region as #1 in Pennsylvania and #7 of all regional civics bees in our nation. We are proud of our students’ participation and the outreach leadership for this event provided by our staff liaison, Tony Merchlinsky. We applaud all our students and their school districts for embracing civics and the importance of civics in our society,” said Robert S. Carl Jr., President & CEO of the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce.

The National Civics Bee® is a nonpartisan initiative designed to encourage middle school students to become more informed and engaged citizens. Open to students in grades 6 through 8, the competition begins with an essay round in which students share ideas for improving their communities. This year, the Schuylkill County competition saw an overwhelming response, with more than 350 essay submissions from students across the region.

From that pool, the top 20 finalists were selected to advance to the live competition, where they will compete on stage through multiple-choice quiz rounds and a live question-and-answer session with a panel of judges. The top three students will receive cash prizes and advance to the state-level competition, with the opportunity to ultimately compete at the National Civics Bee Championship in Washington, D.C. in Fall 2026.

“The level of engagement from our school districts across Schuylkill County has been incredible,” said Tony Merchlinsky, Member Relations & Marketing Director at the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce. “We are extremely grateful to our local educators, administrators, and schools for embracing this program and encouraging their students to participate. In just our second year, we saw nearly ten times the number of essay submissions compared

to year one, which speaks volumes about the commitment to civic education in our community and the enthusiasm of our students to get involved.”

The Schuylkill Chamber extends its sincere appreciation to the local school districts, teachers, and administrators whose support made this program possible. Their commitment to civic education and student engagement played a vital role in the success of this year’s competition.

The event is open to the public, with the program beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Penn State Schuylkill. Community members, families, and local leaders are encouraged to attend and support these outstanding students as they showcase their knowledge and ideas.

The Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce is proud to participate in the National Civics Bee® because of its belief that informed and active citizens are essential to a strong community, economy, and workforce. Through this initiative, the Chamber aims to promote civic knowledge and celebrate civic pride across Schuylkill County.

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