



Public Information Office  
**United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Ninth Circuit Civics Contest Focuses on Voting Rights Milestones**

*Students asked to consider relevance of 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> amendments today*

SAN FRANCISCO – The anniversaries of two constitutional amendments that greatly expanded suffrage in this country are the focus of this year’s Ninth Circuit Civics Contest: the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment, which granted voting rights to persons of color, and the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, which accorded those same rights to women.

The contest offers high school students in the western United States and Pacific islands an opportunity to win cash prizes while learning about the role of the judicial branch in preserving our constitutional rights. Students are asked to write an essay or produce a short video in response to the topic. The 2020 contest theme, “The Right to Vote: Milestone Anniversaries,” poses the following challenge to participants:

*In the wake of the 15th and 19th Amendments, barriers remained to prevent United States citizens from voting. **Do formal or informal barriers remain today? What additional changes would you make, if any, to Americans’ voting rights?***

The contest is open to young people in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Students in grades 9-12 in public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are invited to participate.

The contest is organized by the Public Information and Community Outreach Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, and sponsored by Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the federal district and bankruptcy courts in the 15 judicial districts that make up the circuit.

A total of \$7,000 in cash prizes will be awarded in the circuit-wide contest. The top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions will receive \$2,000 for 1st place, \$1,000 for 2nd place and \$500 for 3rd place. The 1st-place winners along with a parent or guardian also will be invited to the 2020 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Portland, Oregon, in July.

Many students also have a chance to win cash prizes in local competitions sponsored by the individual judicial districts to select finalists for the circuit-wide contest.

**Contest rules and other information are available now on the contest website:**

<https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest/>. Entries will be accepted beginning February 15, 2020. The deadline for entries is 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on March 25, 2020. Finalists will be announced in May and the winners in June.

For more information about the Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, please contact the Ninth Circuit Office of the Circuit Executive, [civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov) / or (415) 355-8873.

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