



# United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## Ninth Circuit Announces 2022 Civics Contest Winners

SAN FRANCISCO – Alaska, California, Montana and Washington state high school students are the winners of the 2022 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an educational outreach effort sponsored by the United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit and the Public Information and Community Outreach (PICO) Committee. This year’s theme was “**The First Amendment and the Schoolhouse Gate: Students’ Free Speech Rights.**” Students were asked to address “**What are students’ free speech rights – and responsibilities – on and off campus?**”

“The question of what are students’ free speech rights – and responsibilities – on and off campus is foundational to young people’s understanding of intergenerational civic duties for a fair and just society,” said Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary H. Murguia. “It is truly wonderful that so many students engaged in the opportunity to contribute their ideas about individual rights through essays and videos for our circuit-wide civics contest. I am also deeply grateful to the many volunteers who worked diligently on every detail to make this competition a success,” she noted.

### **Winners of the essay competition are:**

First place – Kevin Guo (\$3,000), Cupertino High School, Cupertino, California

Second place – Lillian Yang (\$1,700), West Anchorage High School, Anchorage, Alaska

Third place – Sophia Rey (\$1,000), Sehome High School, Bellingham, Washington

### **Winners of the video competition are:**

First place – Team of Sofia Tretiak, Francesco Comuzzi and Enrico Scuppa (Total of \$3,000), Terry High School, Montana

Second place – Jesus Montes (\$1,700), Rubidoux High School, Jurupa Valley, California

Third place – Gillian Celis (\$1,000), Eastlake High School, Chula Vista, California

First-place winners, along with a parent or guardian, will be invited to attend the 2022 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Big Sky, Montana. Federal courts in all 15 judicial districts in the Ninth Circuit held local contests with winners who went on to compete in the circuit-wide contest. Of the 800 essays and 112 video entries received, 42 essays and 29 videos from the local contests advanced to the circuit level. Of the entries that advanced, 12 essays and 10 videos were selected for final consideration by the PICO Committee members composed of judges, court executives, attorneys and staff, who helped plan and organize the contest. Blind judging was employed throughout the judging process.

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**Essay finalists who made it to the top 12 for final consideration are:**

- Yuna Bi, Benicia High School, Benicia, California
- Gillian Celis, Eastlake High School, Chula Vista, California
- Oliver Charat-Collins, Canyon Crest Academy, San Diego, California
- Jin Chung, St. John's School, Tumon, Guam
- Liz Duke-Moe, Boise High School, Boise, Idaho
- Benjamin Flitcroft, Benicia High School, Benicia, California
- Paige Goetzenberger, Arizona School for the Arts, Phoenix, Arizona
- Dominico Granieri, Reno High School, Reno, Nevada
- Erica Richardson, Ballard High School, Seattle, Washington

**Video finalists who made it to the top 10 for final consideration are:**

- Team of Sargun Bhatia and Diya Daftary, BASIS Chandler, Chandler, Arizona
- Team of Rachel Cabales, Kedrick Diego and Josh Santiago, George Washington High School, Mangilao, Guam
- Sophia Calandrillo, Shorewood High School, Shoreline, Washington
- Team of Maddux Gillett, Jacob Keaka and Hayden Konstantin, Sherwood High School, Sherwood, Oregon
- Jay Paek, Homestead High School, Cupertino, California
- Team of Kailey Russell, Josie Sawyer and Kailey Russell, Galena High School, Reno, Nevada
- Giovanna Sanchez, Bonita Vista High School, Chula Vista, California

Winning essays and videos will be posted on the [civic contest website](#) in July.

The competition was open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private and parochial schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status in nine western states and two Pacific island jurisdictions. Prizes and contest-related expenditures are funded through attorney admission fees collected by the federal courts in the Ninth Circuit to fund educational programs for the bar and community.

The PICO Committee was established in 2000 by the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, the governing body for federal courts in the West. The committee seeks to promote public understanding of and confidence in the judicial system through civics education and outreach to the community and media. The committee includes federal judges, court executives, attorneys and court staff.

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