



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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NEWS RELEASE

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2023 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest Winners Announced

SAN FRANCISCO – High school students from California, Hawaii, Idaho and Washington state are the winners of the 2023 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an essay and video contest sponsored by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and its 15 judicial districts, and the Ninth Circuit’s Public Information and Community Outreach (PICO) committee in an effort to promote civics education throughout the circuit. The theme was “The 28th Amendment—What Should Our Next Amendment Be?” and students were challenged to think about what amendment they would propose and why, and how they would get their amendment ratified.

“The theme of this year’s Civics Contest, ‘The 28th Amendment—What Should Our Next Amendment Be?’ invited students to reflect on the privileges and obligations of citizenship combined with their aspirations for the fair operation and oversight of government. I am delighted that so many young people in our circuit took the time to share their valuable ideas with us through their thoughtful essay and creative video submissions. Congratulations to the winners of this year’s competition!” said Ninth Circuit Chief Judge Mary H. Murguia.

Winners of the essay competition who will receive cash prizes are:

First place—Liam Hutchison (\$3,000), Punahou School, Honolulu, Hawaii

Second place—Emma Foster (\$1,700), Castilleja School, Palo Alto, California

Third place—Hannah Kurland-Cohen (\$1,000), The Downtown School, Seattle, Washington

Winners of the video competition who will receive cash prizes are:

First place—Luke Blue (\$3,000), Mt. Spokane High School, Mead, Washington

Second place—Team of Kevin Guo, Viktor Maletin and Annie Shang (total of \$1,700), Cupertino High School, Cupertino, California

Third place—Team of James Sripranaratanakul and Martin Anderson (total of \$1,000), IDEA High School, Tacoma, Washington

The students who made it to the final round of judging did so well that the PICO committee decided to award \$300 to two students for honorable mentions: Ananya Mahadevan (essay), of California Connections Academy, in Ripon, Calif., and Delaney Blenkinsop (video), of Boise High School, in Boise, Idaho.

The first-place winners, along with a parent or guardian, will also be invited to attend the 2023 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. Federal courts in all 15 judicial districts in the Ninth Circuit

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held local contests with winners who went on to compete in the circuit-wide contest. Of the 966 essays and 86 video entries received, 45 essays and 30 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 PICO committee members, judges, court and unit executives, and attorneys. Blind judging was used throughout the judging process.

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

- Mihika Agrawal, Cupertino High School, Cupertino, California
- Luke Alexander, Sehome High School, Bellingham, Washington
- Madeleine Chang, Hamilton High School, Chandler, Arizona
- David Estrada, Windward School, Los Angeles
- Ayden Kelley, Moscow High School, Moscow, Idaho
- Courtney Tetteh-Martey, Sage Hill School, Newport Coast, California
- Jia Ross Nicdao, Marianas High School, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands
- Kate Stuckart, Central Catholic High School, Portland, Oregon

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

- Devin Huynh, Dr. Richard A. Vladovic Harbor Teacher Preparation Academy, Wilmington, California
- Team of Julia Karsner, Callie Kocher and Ananya Nukala, Castilleja School, Palo Alto, California
- Mia Ramos, Tanque Verde High School, Tucson, Arizona
- Teah Simon, 'Iolani School, Honolulu
- Stella Tenta, Castilleja School, Palo Alto, California
- Team of Julianna Villegas, Kieu Oanh and Akina Tran, Hoover High School, San Diego

Winning essays and videos will be posted on the civics contest website

<https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest/> later this month.

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.

PICO 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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