



LOUISIANA CENTER FOR LAW AND CIVIC EDUCATION

CONSTITUTION DAY ESSAY CONTEST

In conjunction with the "Open Doors for the Federal Courts" initiative, the Constitution Day Committee, chaired by the Honorable Mary Ann Vial Lemmon, is sponsoring a "Constitution Day Essay Contest" for grades 8-12, on a topic related to the constitutional rights of citizens. The author of the winning essay will be awarded a non-monetary prize and an invitation to read the essay before the 2014 naturalization ceremony attendees and a congregation of invited high school students at Loyola University in New Orleans on September 17, 2014.

THE TOPIC IS CYBERBULLYING

Bullying always has been an unpleasant and harmful part of growing up. Combining bullying with the presence of social media - cyberbullying - allows taunts, insults and harassment that once circulated around the school yard to circulate around the world, 24 hours a day, and stay alive indefinitely. The documented growth of cyberbullying has prompted much discussion about its causes, its effects, who should be responsible for curbing it and what consequences cyberbullies should face.

Considering the significance of our constitutional right to free speech, please discuss whether punishment or other consequences should be imposed on someone who conveys hurtful comments about another person via social media or cellphone texting (cyberbullying), what those ramifications might be, and who should impose them.

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- In view of the potential impact of hurtful comments conveyed through social media and texting, should our First Amendment rights become more limited? How?
- What is a school's role in both protecting free speech and protecting students from cyberbullying?
- What responsibility, if any, do students have to take action when they witness cyberbullying?
- Is it still true that "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me"?

Click [here](#) for a list of potential research materials.

Constitutional Essay Rules

- Open to students 8-12 grades.
- Essay must be no more than 300 words. Submissions will be judged on understanding of the issue, clear writing and thinking, presentation, grammar and spelling.
- Guidance from teachers and parents is encouraged, but the contest is designed as a student exercise, and, as such, essays are expected to be the student's original

- Essay must be accompanied with a cover sheet listing: Student's name, school name and address, grade, home address, email address and phone number. Teacher's name, email address and phone number.
- Students may submit one essay only. Duplicate entries will be disallowed.
- Essays must be emailed to peggy.cotogno@lsba.org or postmarked by September 5, 2014. U.S. Postal address is Constitution Day Essay Committee, Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education, 601 St. Charles Ave., 4th Floor, New Orleans, LA 70130.

Note to Teachers and School Administrators - this essay contest is in conjunction with a Constitution Day Celebration to be held at the Roussel Performance Hall on the campus of Loyola University in New Orleans on September 17, 2014. Schools are invited to bring their students to the event which will include the 2014 Naturalization Ceremony. It will begin at 10 a.m. and be over by noon. Please contact peggy.cotogno@lsba.org if you are interested in participating.



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Text | [Optional Link](#)