

# 2015 Essay Contest

# Our Constitution

## What the American Dream Means to Me

Cash prizes  
will be awarded:

1st place: \$500

2nd place: \$300

3rd place: \$200

Contest winners will be invited to a special ceremony on September 15, 2015, at the United States Bankruptcy Court in Los Angeles. During the ceremony, the winners will read their essays for their families and teachers, as well as judges, lawyers and other professionals.

Deadline for submission is 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time June 1, 2015. For more information, please visit [www.cacb.uscourts.gov/constitution-day](http://www.cacb.uscourts.gov/constitution-day).

Sponsored by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California and the Los Angeles Chapter of the Federal Bar Association to celebrate Constitution Day. Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the United States Constitution on September 17, 1787.

# 2015 Constitution Day Essay Contest

## OUR CONSTITUTION

### What the American Dream Means to Me

The American Dream is solidly rooted in democratic principles of our society. The United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and later amendments provide for individual freedoms, equal opportunity, impartial justice, and other democratic ideals.

"Our Constitution: What the American Dream Means to Me" is the theme of a civics contest focusing on how the American Dream is made possible by the Constitution. The contest, open to high school students in the greater Los Angeles area, provides students an opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas on the theme in a 500 to 750 word essay.

Contest winners will receive cash prizes and invitations to a special ceremony on September 15, 2015, at the United States Bankruptcy Court in Los Angeles. During the ceremony, the winners will read their essays for their families and teachers, as well as judges, lawyers, and other professionals.

The contest is sponsored by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California and the Los Angeles Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. The contest rules and entry form are available at [www.cacb.uscourts.gov/contest-rules](http://www.cacb.uscourts.gov/contest-rules). Essays must be submitted electronically by June 1, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time via email to [civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov).

For more information, contact Sonia Cheek by phone at (213) 894-1486 or by email at [civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov).

Please visit our [Resources](#) page for links to online sources of information about the Constitution. All students must register for the contest using this [registration link](#).

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be awarded:

1st place: \$500

2nd place: \$300

3rd place: \$200

# Essay Contest Rules

The United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California and the Los Angeles Chapter of the Federal Bar Association are sponsoring this contest for high school students in the greater Los Angeles area. You must register to participate in the contest. Registering does not obligate you to submit an entry. ([Click here to register.](#))

Essays should be 500-750 words long. Students may seek the advice of a teacher, parent, or other adult, but the actual writing of the essay must be done by the student.

**Theme:** "Our Constitution: What the American Dream Means to Me." The focus should be on how the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and later amendments make the American Dream possible. Students may discuss the experiences of others, such as grandparents, parents, or teachers, or they may focus on their own hopes and aspirations. Students are encouraged to examine the role of the Judicial Branch in resolving important constitutional questions.

**Judging:** Judging will be based on the quality of the research, critical thinking, and creative expression evident in the essay. Submissions will be judged by a panel that includes federal judges, attorneys, and court staff. Scoring will be as follows:

Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme:	40 points
Originality:	25 points
Technique (grammar, spelling, and composition):	25 points
Compliance with the rules:	10 points

**Prizes:** Cash prizes will be awarded in the following amounts: \$500 for first place, \$300 for second place, and \$200 for third place. The winners will be invited to a special ceremony on September 15, 2015, at the United States Bankruptcy Court in Los Angeles. During the ceremony, winners will read their essays for their families and teachers, as well as judges, lawyers, and other professionals. The winning entries will also be displayed on the Bankruptcy Court's website.

**Submission Deadline:** Submissions are due by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time on June 1, 2015. Only essays submitted by registered entrants will be considered. Entries must be in Microsoft Word format and submitted by email to [civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov).

**Release Forms:** Because the winning essays will be published and displayed on the Court's website, and included in other Court publications, we require a signed release form (Release). The Release indicates that a student and/or parent or legal guardian is aware that the student's essay may be made publicly available.

**Disqualification:** You will be disqualified if you provide false information, do not meet the submission deadline, do not submit the Release, plagiarize, or violate any other contest rule. The contest organizers reserve the right to disqualify an entry that they believe is not suitable for viewing by the general public.

For more information, contact Sonia Cheek by phone at (213) 894-1486 or by email at [civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov).

All students must register for the contest using this [registration link](#).

**Persons not Eligible to Participate in the Essay Contest:** 1) Employees and relatives of employees of the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California; 2) Relatives of a district, magistrate, or bankruptcy judge in the Central District of California; 3) Any person residing in the same household as a U.S. District Court employee, a U.S. Bankruptcy Court employee, or a district, magistrate, or bankruptcy judge in the Central District of California; 4) Employees and relatives of employees of the members of the committee judging the Essay Writing Contest (Committee); 5) Relatives of the members of the Committee; and 6) Any person residing in the same household as a member of the Committee.

# Essay Contest Release Form

Your essay (Essay) may be published and/or displayed on a public Internet website as well as in other formats, including, but not limited to Court publications. By signing this release form (Release) you and/or your parent or legal guardian (if you are under 18), acknowledge that the Essay may be made publicly available and you and/or your parent or legal guardian consent to this use of your Essay. This Release must be received by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time on June 1, 2015. The Release may be scanned and emailed to [civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@cacb.uscourts.gov) or faxed to (213) 894-1492.

## Participant Release Form

Except for copyrighted materials separately identified, I hereby assign, transfer, or otherwise convey to the organizers of the 2015 Constitution Day Essay Contest, all rights, titles, and interests in and to the essay submitted for the contest, including without limitation all copyrights and other intellectual property rights therein. Furthermore, I agree that my Essay may be used, edited, reproduced, distributed, and presented in any way deemed proper by the contest organizers without any additional consent, or payment to me or anyone else. There is no time limit on the validity of this Release nor is there any geographic limitation on where my Essay may be used, distributed, or presented.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

If Student is under 18:

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)