

United States District Court
District of Connecticut

2021 LAW DAY ESSAY COMPETITION

THEME #1: “Your Vote, Your Voice, Our Democracy: The 19th Amendment at 100”

In 2019-2020, the United States commemorated the centennial of the transformative constitutional amendment that guaranteed that the right of citizens to vote would not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex. We recognize one of the longest social movements in U.S. history, which culminated in a massive extension of democracy, individual rights, and justice. Women leaders and their allies began the organized movement for the vote in 1848, and for the next 72 years, women lobbied, marched, and picketed for the right to vote. The suffragists set precedents in protest, civil organization, and civil disobedience that inspired generations to come.

One hundred years after women were granted this most basic right of citizenship, three women sit on the United States Supreme Court, and a woman is now Vice President of the United States. Much progress has been made in ensuring that women’s voices are heard in our democracy, and the goal of equality continues to be an important one.

THEME #2: “Advancing the Rule of Law”

The rule of law is a set of principles, or ideals, for ensuring an orderly and just society. These principles are intended to create a system in which no one is above the law, everyone is treated equally under the law, everyone is held accountable to the same laws, there are clear and fair processes for enforcing laws, there is an independent judiciary, and human rights are guaranteed for all. The centrality of the rule of law in successful societies is experienced, if not acknowledged, in American life every day. Even established democracies like the United States still struggle to ensure that the rule of law is honored and advanced.

As President Dwight D. Eisenhower explained, “The clearest way to show what the rule of law means to us in everyday life is to recall what has happened when there is no rule of law.” Examples of daily practices taken for granted but protected by the rule of law include the free exercise of individual rights – expressing opinions that are unpopular, practicing religions that are not widely understood, and participating in public life at school, in court, and in the voting booth.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write an essay of 500 words or less.
2. Type or handwrite your essay in ink.
3. In your essay, please address one of these topics:

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- Describe the strategies suffragists used to fight for the vote, and, referencing a specific example, discuss what method you think was most effective and why. Discuss how these methods may be effective to advance the vote today.

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- The rule of law guarantees equality and fairness to everyone, and yet we know that this isn't always the case. Identify current events that illustrate this observation. What resources do we have in America to ensure that such cases are corrected and that the rule of law is enforced?

4. Attach a cover sheet that includes a number assigned to the student, the student's school, grade and teacher.
5. **Do not include your name on the essay.** Entries will be judged on accuracy of information, clarity of expression, content and originality.
6. **Submission:**
Email essays with attached cover sheets to:
Public_outreach@ctd.uscourts.gov
7. **Deadline:** All entries must be submitted by **May 3, 2021 (or a date mutually agreeable).**

PRIZES: **If there are at least twenty submissions received in compliance with the rules,** three winners will be determined.
First prize is a \$50 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble
Second prize is a \$30 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble
Third prize is a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble

If you need additional information, please contact:

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