



## LAW DAY 2021

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*What is Law Day? Law Day, held annually on May 1, is a national day set aside to celebrate the role of law in our society and to cultivate a deeper understanding of the legal profession. There are two themes this year because COVID-19 protocols prevented the District Court from conducting the Law Day programs last year.*

*The Public Outreach Committee of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut invites schools to participate in any of the following Law Day activities.*

### **THEME 1: “YOUR VOTE, YOUR VOICE, OUR DEMOCRACY: THE 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Passed by Congress on June 4, 1919, and ratified on August 18, 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment granted women the right to vote, 72 years after the struggle for women’s suffrage began. These Law Day programs will explore how American women fought for, and won, the right to vote through their voice and action. The programs are designed to educate the public about the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and the importance of promoting the exercise of the right to vote. For 2021, all Law Day activities will be conducted virtually.

- **READ A PICTURE BOOK TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:** A judge can visit an elementary school class via Zoom to read a picture book about the women’s suffrage movement. Examples of such books are: *Marching with Aunt Susan: Susan B. Anthony and the Fight for Women’s Suffrage*; *Elizabeth Leads the Way: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote*; or, *Around America to Win the Vote: Two Suffragists, a Kitten and 10,000 Miles*.
- **TEACH A 30-MINUTE CLASS:** Middle or high schools classes, with or without the involvement of a judge and/or attorney, can show a 5-minute video (*The Courts and You: From Suffragist Sashes to Antiwar Armband*) and then present discussion starter questions to go along with the content of the video.

- **TRIVIA GAMES:** The court can provide to middle or high school students educational materials related to the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and related trivia questions. A judge and/or attorney can teach the subject matter and then participate in a fun Zoom trivia session with the students.
- **ART CONTEST:** The court can invite elementary and middle school students to submit artwork and photographs depicting what the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment means to them. The court can display some artwork in the courthouse and can display digital artwork and photography during an evening Zoom session. The court can invite artists and their families to attend an evening Zoom session with a judge during which a short video of the displays in the courthouse and the digital submissions can be aired. Certificates and/or prizes can be awarded.
- **ESSAY CONTEST:** The court can invite middle or high school students to submit short essays detailing the meaning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to their lives. The essays will be judged by court staff, attorneys and/or judges. The court can invite contributing students and their families to attend an evening Zoom session with a judge who can invite the winning students to read their essays. Certificates and/or prizes can be awarded.
- **TEACH A 50-MINUTE CLASS:** A judge can teach middle or high school students through Zoom from a PowerPoint presenting the history of women’s suffrage in the United States. The judge can address a list of related questions with the students.
- **MEET A FEMALE JUDGE:** The court can host a virtual Q&A session with middle or high school students with some of our female judges who will talk to the students about their journeys. The session can be complimented with a video (Women as “Way Pavers” in the Federal Judiciary).
- **TEACH A 50-MINUTE CLASS:** The court can present a 25-minute video to high school students through Zoom that emphasizes citizenship and the power of the vote. In the video, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and other Supreme Court Justices explain the importance of voting. There is a related Educator’s Guide (The Unfinished Business of Women’s Equality) with discussion questions and learning activities that the judges and/or attorneys can teach from or that the court can provide to teachers.
- **REENACT THE TRIAL OF SUSAN B. ANTHONY:** Using the transcript of the trial of Susan B. Anthony that the court can provide, the court and teachers can collaborate to teach high school students about Susan B. Anthony’s role in the suffrage movement. The court can connect high school students over Zoom with volunteer lawyer mentors to reenact the trial of Susan B. Anthony. The students can assume various roles with the judge mentoring a student presiding over the trial.

## **THEME 2: ADVANCING THE RULE OF LAW**

These Law Day Programs address the basics of the rule of law and what it means in daily life, in times of calm and unrest alike. The rule of law is a set of principles, or ideals, for ensuring an orderly and just society. Many countries throughout the world strive to uphold the rule of law where 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 law, there is an independent judiciary, and human rights are guaranteed for all. Even established democracies like the United States still struggle to ensure that the rule of law is honored and advanced. Important aspects of the rule of law that relate to the Court system include a commitment by judges to apply the law to everyone fairly, making the law clear and legal proceedings transparent, and balancing individual rights against the safety of others. For 2021, all Law Day activities will be conducted virtually.

- **ART CONTEST:** The court can invite elementary and middle school students to submit artwork or photography depicting what the rule of law means to them. The court can display some artwork in the courthouse and can display digital artwork and photography during an evening Zoom session. The court can invite artists and their families to attend an evening Zoom session with a judge during which a short video of the displays in the courthouse and the digital submissions can be aired. Certificates and/or prizes can be awarded.
- **ESSAY CONTEST:** The court can invite middle or high school students to submit short essays detailing the meaning of the rule of law in their lives. The essays will be judged by court staff, attorneys and/or judges. The court can invite contributing students and their families to attend an evening Zoom session with a judge who can invite the winning students to read their essays. Certificates and/or prizes can be awarded.
- **TRIVIA GAMES:** The court can provide to middle or high school students educational materials related to the rule of law and related trivia questions. A judge and/or attorneys can teach the subject matter and then participate in a fun Zoom trivia session with the students.
- **MEET A JUDGE:** The court can host a virtual Q&A session with a judge to discuss how as citizens we all share the responsibility of promoting the rule of law, defending liberty and pursuing justice, and how this role coincides with civil discourse.
- **50-MINUTE LAW DAY PROGRAM:** The court can bring a 50-minute Law Day program to high school students. The program begins with a 3-minute video (Court Shorts: Rule of Law) with discussion starter questions and writing prompts that are intended to stimulate critical thinking about the real-life ways this abstract concept is part of our daily routines. The judge and/or attorneys can use the questions to engage the students.

- **90-MINUTE DISTANCE LEARNING CLASS ON THE RULE OF LAW:** The court can provide a 90-minute distance learning program to high school students that involves case law related to expressing unpopular views, participating in the judicial process, access to education, and Title IX. The judge and/or attorneys present an overview of the rule of law. The students engage in an interactive warm-up discussion on the specific topic. Teams of students present case summaries and respond to discussion questions.