

High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the U.S. Constitution among high school students. The program presents participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Contests start at the Post level and in many Departments, advance to District level and culminate at the Department level where thousands of dollars are given out in scholarship money that will vary from State to State, but those students who wind up at the top of their Departments are invited to participate at the National level where the American Legion provides \$138,000 in scholarships. The first-place winner will receive \$18,000, second place \$16,000, third place \$14,000 and every student who participates in the first round received a minimum of \$1,500 in scholarships.

Students will present a first round prepared oration of no less than 8 and no more than 10 minutes based on a subject of their choice related to some segment of the Constitution. In the next round, they will be given one of four subjects which will be randomly assigned and once assigned, they will have five minutes to prepare to give an oration of no less than three and no more than five minutes. This year's randomly assigned topics will be either: Amendment 2 – *“A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed;”* or Amendment 3 – *“No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law;”* or Amendment 15 - Section 1. – *“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Section 2. – “The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation;”* or Article 2 Section 4 *“The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.”*

Information has been distributed to high schools across the country, each American Legion post, and as well, is posted on the Legion's website at www.legion.org. The Sons are encouraged to promote this program in their local communities and then assist in conducting the contests. Most contests at the Post level are held in January, District contests in February and Department contests in March.

**Jim Borgman, Vice Chairman National Americanism
Commission, Sons of the American Legion**