



*87th Annual  
2024 High School  
Oratorical Scholarship Program  
"A Constitutional Speech Contest"*



*Pictured left to right: South Dakota American Legion Department Commander Doug Feltman; 1<sup>st</sup> place - Elena Andrews, Beresford; 2<sup>nd</sup> place - Reagan Blackburn, Aberdeen; 3<sup>rd</sup> place - Calister Grimsley, Spearfish; finalist - Alex Vonderau, Rapid City, finalist - Jordan Musser, Colome; and Department Americanism Chairman Larry Madsen.*

### WHAT TO DO

Write an oration, which takes not less than EIGHT (8) minutes nor more than TEN (10) minutes to deliver, on some phase of the Constitution of the United States which will give emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government.

In addition to the above prepared oration, each contestant must be prepared to speak extemporaneously for THREE (3) to FIVE (5) minutes on one of four (4) Articles or Amendments of the US Constitution that have been chosen as Assigned Topics for the 2024 Contest, which can be found at: <https://www.sdlegion.org/oratorical-scholarship/>.

### DATES FOR ENTERING AND COMPLETING CONTEST

High school students who wish to enter the contest should notify their high school principal, who should then notify their local Post American Legion officials. If there is more than one entrant from a high school, there must be a Post contest conducted under the joint auspices of the high school and the American Legion Post to decide the local representative. Every high school conducting a local contest under the joint auspices of the school and local American Legion Post is authorized to enter a contestant in the district contest.

### LOCAL CONTESTS

Contestants are not required to commit oration to memory for local contests, and during the preparation period for the extemporaneous talk, may make notes to be used during delivery. However, no notes or prompting will be allowed in contests above the Post level.

Chairpersons of local contests will secure no less than three nor more than five competent local citizens to judge the local contest.

All Post contests must be completed by January 14, 2024. Send the name of the Post first -place winner to your District Americanism Chairperson.

### DISTRICT CONTESTS

District American Legion Americanism Chairs, and the counties under the jurisdiction of each are as follows:

**DIST. 1** – (Butte, Corson, Dewey, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins, Ziebach counties) Chair: Michael Pauling, ([michaelpauling@ymail.com](mailto:michaelpauling@ymail.com)), 13318 Sunshine Valley Rd, Piedmont, SD 57769. District Contest to be held at Spearfish American Legion Post 164, 3102 E. Fairgrounds Loop, Spearfish, January 21, 2024, 2:00pm. Storm date, January 28th, same time and place.

**DIST. 2** – (Bennett, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Jackson, Jones, Mellette, Pennington, Shannon, Todd counties) Chair: Doug Harris ([doughinut@gmail.com](mailto:doughinut@gmail.com)), 4913 Charmwood Dr, Rapid City, SD 57701. District Contest to be held at SDSM&T Classroom Bldg., 501 E. Saint Joseph St, January 7, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Storm date, January 14th, same time and place.

**DIST. 3** - (Gregory, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Lyman, Potter, Stanley, Sully, Tripp counties) Chair: Larry Madsen, ([larry\\_madsen@hotmail.com](mailto:larry_madsen@hotmail.com)) 906 E Commercial Ave., Gettysburg, SD 57442. District Contest to be held at the Faith Lutheran Church Christian Living Center, 714 N Grand Ave, Pierre, SD. January 14, 2024, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, January 21st, same time and place.

## STATE CONTEST

**DIST. 4** – (Brown, Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, Spink, Walworth counties) Chair: Dale Strom, ([dale\\_strom@yahoo.com](mailto:dale_strom@yahoo.com)) 115 N. Kline St, Aberdeen, SD 57401. District Contest to be held at the Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, 431 W Melgaard Rd, Aberdeen, SD 57401 January 7, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Storm date, January 14th, same time and place.

**DIST. 5** – (Brookings, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Marshall, Roberts counties) Chair: Clayton Nei, ([pandcnei@gmail.com](mailto:pandcnei@gmail.com))18257 465<sup>th</sup> Ave. Castlewood, SD 57223. District Contest will be held at Castlewood Lutheran Church, Jan. 6, 2024, 1:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan. 13th, same time and place.

**DIST. 6** – (Aurora, Beadle, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Miner, Sanborn counties) Chair: Tim Thomas, ([photostoday@midstatesd.net](mailto:photostoday@midstatesd.net)) 112 S Merrill St Chamberlain SD 57325. District Contest to be held at the Kimball Legion Post, 232 S Main, Kimball, SD, January 7, 2024, 2:00 p.m. Storm date, Jan 14th, same time and place.

**DIST. 7** – (Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, Moody, Union counties) Chair: Linda Liddell, ([Lliddell08@gmail.com](mailto:Lliddell08@gmail.com)), 1016 NW 5<sup>th</sup> St, Madison, SD 57042. District Contest to be held at the Humboldt Community Center, January 21st, 2:00 p.m. Storm date January 28th, same time and place.

**DIST. 8** – (Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Douglas, Hutchinson, Turner, Yankton counties) Contact: Joseph Knoer, ([josephknoer24@gmail.com](mailto:josephknoer24@gmail.com)), 1215 Lincoln St. #101, Vermillion, SD 57069. District Contest to be held at the Al Neuharth Media Center, 555 N Dakota St., Vermillion, January 13, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Storm Date January 20th, same time and place.

**District Chairpersons are in charge of District Contests.**

**\*\*ALL District Contests must be completed on or before January 28, 2024.**

### EACH DISTRICT CHAIRPERSON MUST

Report the name of the District winner to State Americanism Commission Chair, Dan Wyatt, at [dakotasarge@gmail.com](mailto:dakotasarge@gmail.com) or 605-270-2213, **and** to SD American Legion State Headquarters at: [maryjo@slegion.org](mailto:maryjo@slegion.org) or 605-886-3604 upon the completion of their District Contest.

**“All the great speakers were bad speakers at first”  
Ralph Waldo Emerson**

*Teachers of Government, History, Civics, English and Speech can all be of great assistance to students in helping to prepare for the contests. School and public librarians can be of help as well.*

The top contestant from each District will compete in the State Finals on Sunday, February 18, 2024. The contest will be held at The Lodge at Deadwood, Deadwood, SD at 10:30 a.m. or at the conclusion of the non-denominational Sunday Church Service and the adjournment of the 2024 SD American Legion Mid-Winter Conference. Five judges will evaluate the work of the contestants in the State Contest.

### NATIONAL CONTEST SCHOLARSHIPS

The National Contest will be held in Hillsdale, Mich., at Hillsdale College, May 17 -19, 2024. Scholarship awards are presented to the three finalists in the Final Round of the National Contest as follows: 1st place - \$25,000; 2nd place - \$22,500; 3rd place - \$20,000. Each Department (State) winner who is certified into and participates in the first round of the National Contest, will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Each first-round winner who advances to and participates in the second round but does not advance to the Final Round will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship to pursue education beyond high school.

### PRIZES AND AWARDS

Local awards must be funded by the local American Legion Post.

Chairpersons of District contests will secure three or five competent citizens to judge the district contest.

The winner of each District contest will receive a medal and have the right to represent the district in the State contest. Any other prizes at the District level are the responsibility of the individual District.

The first-place winner of the State competition will receive a \$1,500 scholarship and a trophy, plus a plaque for display in his/her high school trophy case. Second place winner will receive a \$1,000 scholarship and a trophy, and third place winner will receive a \$500 scholarship and a trophy. Remaining finalists will each receive a \$200 scholarship and a trophy. Award scholarships are redeemable in any school above high school level within 5 years of graduation.

### MATERIAL FOR STUDY

All contestants and coaches should be familiar with the rules for the American Legion Oratory Contest as defined in the national brochure; Annual High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, “A Constitutional Speech Contest” which are available on-line at: <http://www.legion.org/publication> or by writing The American Legion State Headquarters, PO Box 67, Watertown, S.D. 57201.