

United States District Court  
for the  
District of Columbia  
333 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Beryl A. Howell  
Chief District Court Judge

**For Immediate Release**

**Chief Judge Announces Essay Contest**

Washington, D.C. – October 22, 2018: The United States District Court for the District of Columbia is pleased to announce that it, in collaboration with D.C. Public Schools, the D.C. Office of the Attorney General, and American University, is sponsoring an essay contest for District of Columbia Public and Charter School 12th graders.

The topic of the contest is "How well does the Equal Protection Clause protect students in schools?" Twelfth graders were selected because they study the Equal Protection Clause as part of their American government curriculum during the fall semester.

Essays must be between 500 and 1,000 words. The deadline for submission is December 3, 2018. All participants will be invited to attend an awards ceremony at the District Court on January 10, 2019 where the first prize of \$1,000, second prize of \$500, and third prize of \$250 will be awarded and winners will read their essays.

The attached flyer provides detailed information about the contest.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE  
**District of Columbia**

Honorable Beryl A. Howell, Chief Judge | Angela D. Caesar, Clerk of Court

**Essay Contest: How well does the Equal Protection Clause protect students in schools?**

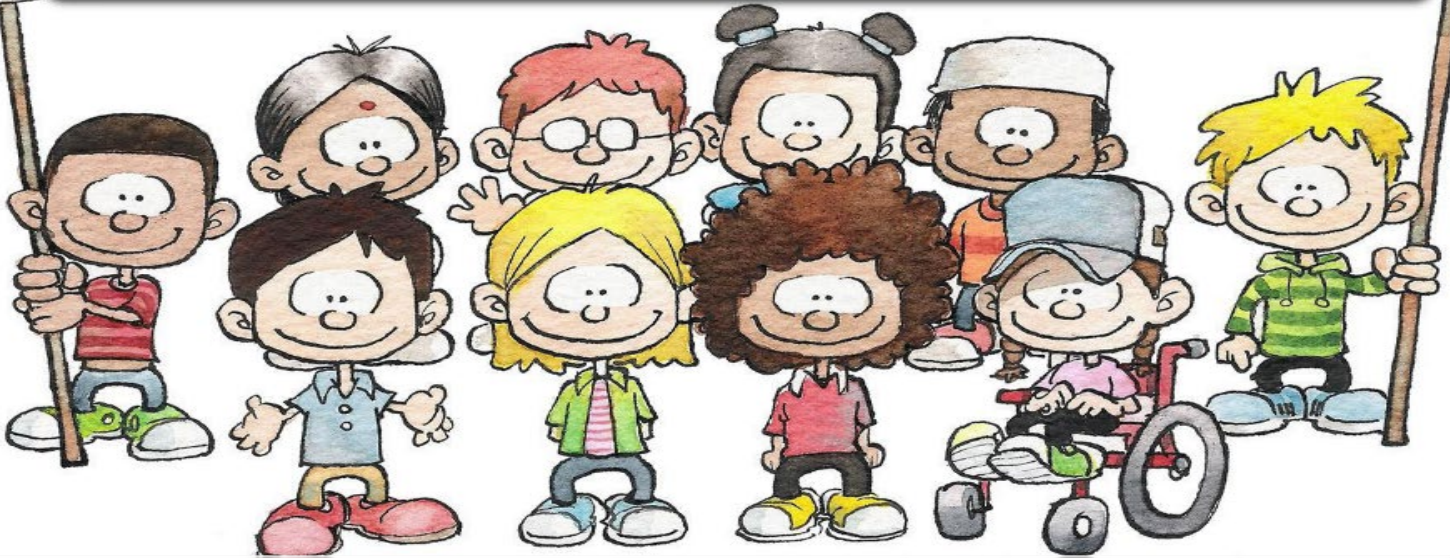


illustration : alex leonard  
**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S**  
Commissioner  
Scotland

**ESSAY CONTEST FOR TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS ATTENDING DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC AND CHARTER SCHOOLS**

First place winner will receive a **\$1,000 prize**, second place winner will receive a **\$500 prize**, and third place winner will receive a **\$250 prize**.

Sponsored by the Community Engagement Committee of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in collaboration with the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General, and American University.





# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE District of Columbia

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## Essay Prompt: How well does the Equal Protection Clause protect students in schools?

The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution provides, in relevant part, that no state can “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Over the past 150 years, Congress and the courts have applied this clause to the right to equal educational opportunities in the United States.

Contestants may wish to consider:

- Why was the 14th Amendment needed after the Civil War?
- How does the 14th Amendment establish equal protection?
- Using one or more Supreme Court cases and/or statutes, such as those listed below, evaluate how well Court rulings have promoted equal protection in high school classrooms, athletics or college admissions.

## Court Cases and Statutes

*Mendez v. Westminster School District* (1947). The Court ruled that placing Mexican-American students into separate “Mexican schools” violated their rights under the Equal Protection Clause.

*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). The Supreme Court ruled that placing African-American and white students in different public schools on the basis of race violated the Equal Protection Clause.

*Lau v. Nichols* (1974). The Supreme Court ruled that failure to provide supplemental language instruction in public school for students with limited English proficiency violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2013), and *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003). The Supreme Court upheld certain affirmative action policies used by two universities to increase minority enrollment, but struck down others.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Prohibits the exclusion of a student based solely on race, color, or national origin.

Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, enacted in 1972. Prohibits the exclusion of a student solely on the basis of sex.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Prohibits the exclusion of a student based solely on the basis of a disability.

Individual with Disabilities Education Act of 1990. Protects educational opportunities for students with disabilities.





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## Who May Enter

District of Columbia Public High School and Charter School 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

Children of District of Columbia District Court Judges, chambers staff, and clerk’s office employees may not participate.

## Essay Length, Deadline, and Submission

Between 500 and 1,000 words, excluding endnote and bibliographies, if used. Double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font.

Each essay must have a separate cover page that includes: (1) Name of Student; (2) Name of School; (3) Student’s grade in School; and (4) Student’s email address.

Essays accepted beginning November 15, 2018. Must be submitted by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on **December 3, 2018 and must be submitted via e-mail at [EPEC@dcd.uscourts.gov](mailto:EPEC@dcd.uscourts.gov)**

## Disqualification

Not being qualified to participate, failing to meet the deadline submission, or not providing a release upon request may result in disqualification.

## Judging

Essays will be judged using the following grading rubric:

**(30) Development of claim:** Addresses the prompt and provides effective, comprehensive development of the claim for how well the Equal Protection Clause protects students in schools that is consistently appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**(30) Accuracy:** Uses specific and accurate evidence such as Supreme Court cases, laws, and historical events that includes precise details and/or quotations from text(s), while establishing cause and effect relationships; uses vocabulary appropriate to the discipline.

**(20) Real world connections:** Makes strong connections between past situations/concepts and present-day situations/concepts, to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the past and the present in relation to the development of the doctrine of equal protection.

**(10) Organization and style:** Uses intentional and effective organizational structure(s) to develop the claim; establishes and maintains an effective style that is clear and coherent.

**(10) Conventions:** Uses standard English conventions with full command and at an appropriate level of complexity; may contain a few minor errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage, but meaning is clear.

## Release Forms

Finalists will be required to provide release forms allowing the publication of their essay on sponsors’ websites and use of photographs of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

## Courthouse Event

All participants will be invited to an awards ceremony and reception at the E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse on January 10, 2019 beginning at 10:00 am. Each finalist will read their essay during the ceremony.

Each finalist will receive a trophy and all participants receive a certificate.

