



**We the People**  
THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION

Directed by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by the United States Congress.

For Immediate Release  
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**STUDENTS VIE FOR CHAMPIONSHIP IN PRESTIGIOUS  
NATIONAL COMPETITION ON CONSTITUTION**

**WHAT**

More than 1,100 high school students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands will test their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights during the 23rd annual We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals.

**WHEN/WHERE**

First-Round Hearings: Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and April 25, 8 a.m.–6 p.m., Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, Va., 703-271-5159.

Top Ten Finalists' Championship Round: Monday, April 26, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30–4:30 p.m., Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 628. Additional information on the classes in the championship round will be available at [www.civiced.org/nationalfinals2010](http://www.civiced.org/nationalfinals2010) after 9:30 p.m. EDT on Sunday, April 25.

Awards Banquet: Monday, April 26, 7 p.m., Omni Shoreham, Washington, D.C.  
All Open for News Coverage

**EVENT HIGHLIGHTS**

Students serve as expert witnesses testifying on constitutional issues in a simulated congressional hearing. Each class is divided into six groups, corresponding with the units in the *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* text. Students are scored on their opening presentation and on answers to follow-up questions by a panel of judges, who grade the students on understanding, constitutional application, reasoning, supporting evidence, responsiveness, and participation. The national finals judges include state Supreme Court judges, public officials, political scientists, historians, educators, attorneys, journalists, and We the People alumni.

National finals judge Susan Leeson admires the students' perspectives on the Constitution. "Through their testimony, students often bring insights into matters of constitutional interpretations that are new to us. They show us that it is a vibrant document that they care about, and it matters to them," said Leeson, a retired Oregon Supreme Court justice. "They feel that they have ownership and responsibility for it."

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The We the People experience has a lasting impact on students well beyond the competition, as one participant explains. "I think it is important to learn about the Constitution because it helps us to be better citizens. It makes us more involved in our community and helps us to be better prepared as voters."

### **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

Implemented nationally in upper elementary, middle, and high schools, the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution program has reached more than 30 million students and 81,000 teachers in its 23-year history. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by Congress. The program is directed by the Center for Civic Education, based in Los Angeles, California, and Washington, D.C.

Survey of program alumni show that We the People students become active citizens. Ninety-five percent of the respondents voted in the November 2008 election. Additionally, 76 percent voted in all previous elections for which they were eligible, and 56 percent had contacted a government official regarding a public issue during the previous 12 months.

### **AWARDS**

First-, second-, and third-place classes receive trophies and individual medallions, with special awards given to fourth- through tenth-place classes at the Monday evening banquet. Non-finalist classes with the top scores in each of the six units of the curriculum and in each of the five geographic regions also receive awards.

During Monday's banquet, U.S. Rep. David Obey [WI-07] will be presented with the 2010 Dale E. Kildee Civitas Award for his contributions to the field of civic education.

### **PHOTOS**

Photos of individual classes will be available on the web at [www.civiced.org/nationalfinals2010](http://www.civiced.org/nationalfinals2010) after 8 p.m. EDT, on Sunday, April 25.

Photos from the final day of hearings for the top 10 classes on Capitol Hill and the awards banquet will be available online Tuesday, April 27.

### **AUDIO**

Charles N. Quigley, executive director of the Center for Civic Education, and Robert S. Leming, We the People program director, talk about the We the People program and the national finals in interviews available as MP3 files at [www.civiced.org/finalsaudio](http://www.civiced.org/finalsaudio).

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