



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.

Media Advisory
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Contact: Tam Taylor or Karen Whitaker
202-861-8800

STUDENTS VIE FOR CHAMPIONSHIP IN PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL COMPETITION ON CONSTITUTION

WHAT

Nearly 1,200 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 24th annual We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals.

WHEN/WHERE

First Two Rounds of Hearings

Saturday and Sunday, April 30 and May 1, 2011

8 a.m.–6 p.m.

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, Virginia

Top Ten Finalists' Championship Round

Monday, May 2, 2011

9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30–4:30 p.m.

Cannon House Office Building; Media Check-in, Room 122

Top ten finalists announcement posted online after 10 p.m. EDT on Sunday, May 1

Awards Banquet

Monday, May 2, 2011

7–9:30 p.m.

Omni Shoreham, Washington, D.C.

Awards announcement at 8:45 p.m. EDT, results posted online after 10 p.m., on Monday, May 2

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 justices, public officials, political scientists, historians, educators, attorneys and We the People alumni.

Awards will be presented to the first- through 10th-place classes and to the top-scoring non-finalist classes for each of the six units of curriculum and in each of five geographic regions. The Ronald Reagan Award will be given to the class with the highest score in answering a question about the 40th president and the executive branch, presented in commemoration of the centennial of Ronald Reagan's birth.

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At the awards banquet on May 2, the Dale E. Kildee Civitas Award will be presented to U.S. Rep. Richard E. Neal (MA-02) for his contributions to the field of civic education.

National finals judge Brian Stark knows firsthand the pressures competing students face, as well as the rewards gained. Stark is a 1995 We the People alumnus from East Kentwood High School in Michigan.

"For me, the most important part of the program was the development of my civic virtue and learning never to take for granted what we are fortunate to have in this country," said Stark, an attorney with the Vermont-based law firm of Bauer, Gravel, Farnham, Nuovo & Parker. "I make sure to exercise my right to vote in every election, no matter if it is a presidential or local election."

A 2010 independent study shows that We the People alumni have a deeper understanding of the Constitution and greater political knowledge than their peers. Ninety-three percent of the We the People alumni surveyed can identify rights guaranteed in the first amendment compared to 27 percent of respondents surveyed in a national study. More than twice as many We the People graduates know the length of a U.S. representative's term and the number of justices sitting on the U.S. Supreme Court than does the general public.

We the People students are also more likely to engage in governmental and civic activities. Seventy percent report contacting an elected official and 92 percent volunteer in their community compared to 39 and 42 percent, respectively, in the national sample.

Implemented 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 90,000 teachers in its 24-year history. The program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act approved by Congress, is directed by the Center for Civic Education, based in Los Angeles, California, and Washington, D.C.

The 2011 We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals is funded by the Center for Civic Education, state donors, and The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation in partnership with the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation.

REPORTER RESOURCES

Photos

Class photos will be available at civiced.org/finalsphotos after 10 p.m. EDT, on Sunday, May 1.

Audio

Charles N. Quigley, Center for Civic Education executive director, and Robert S. Leming, We the People program director, discuss the We the People program and the national finals. The interviews are available as MP3 files at <http://new.civiced.org/national-finals-2011-newsroom>.

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