



ALISON LUNDERGAN GRIMES
SECRETARY OF STATE

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Kentucky High School Principals and Educators
FROM: *Alison Lundergan Grimes*
SUBJECT: 2012-2013 24th Annual Essay and Slogan Contest
DATE: October 1, 2012

For the past 24 years, the Office of the Secretary of State has held a statewide Essay and Slogan Contest for Kentucky students. The discourse this contest stimulates among students is all the more important in light of waning voter trends in the youngest demographics. The contest is an excellent way to garner recognition for your students, and it helps them tangibly interact with the concepts associated with government and democracy.

Students in grades 6-8 are invited to participate in the voter slogan contest, and students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to take part in the essay portion of the contest. I encourage you to distribute the web address listed below and use this project in your classes or with individual students to generate cross-curriculum writing ideas.

Prizes will be awarded for first, second, and third places in the slogan contest, which is open to all 6th - 8th graders. In the essay contest, a first-place prize will be awarded for each high school grade level. The monetary awards for contest winners are made possible by contributions from KEA and KEA Retired, Harp Enterprises Inc., Election Systems & Software, the University of Kentucky Scripps Howards First Amendment Center, and Kentuckiana Election Service Co. The University of Kentucky also will assist in judging the essay portion of the contest. I am grateful to our partners for their generous sponsorships of this program.

     	
<p>SLOGAN CONTEST (Grades 6-8) 1st Prize: \$1000 Savings Bond 2nd Prize: \$600 Savings Bond 3rd Prize: \$400 Savings Bond</p>	<p>ESSAY CONTEST (Grades 9-12) 9th Grade: \$2000 Savings Bond 10th Grade: \$2000 Savings Bond 11th Grade: \$2000 Savings Bond 12th Grade: \$2000 Savings Bond</p>

The Essay Contest prompt, rules, rubric, and entry form are attached to this Memorandum. Please visit <http://www.sos.ky.gov/secdesk/initiatives/civics/contests/> for further information and guidelines for the 2012-2013 Essay and Slogan Contest. All guidelines must be met for any entry to be considered by contest judges, and all entries must be electronically submitted by 5 p.m. (EST) December 1, 2012, or postmarked by that date. I hope you will share this information with any faculty you feel may benefit from it.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Matt Daley in my office at matthew.daley@ky.gov or 502-782-7403. Thank you, and good luck to all of your students!



**Essay Contest Rules and Prompt
24th Annual Essay and Slogan Contest
Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes**

1. The Essay Contest is open to all Kentucky high school students in grades 9-12.
2. Essay entry is limited to one per student. Previous contest entries will not be accepted.
3. Essay entry is limited to 600 words. All entries must be typed and double-spaced.
4. Student and school names shall not appear anywhere in the body of the essay.
5. Essays will be judged on research and understanding of voting and the First Amendment, idea development, organization, language, and correctness (see attached rubric).
6. Students must submit their essays with the enclosed entry form. All sections of the entry form must be completed.
7. Essays may be submitted either online at www.sos.ky.gov/contests or by mail to the address below. Essays submitted online must be in Microsoft Word format.
8. All entries must be submitted electronically by 5 p.m. (EST) December 1, 2012, or postmarked by that date, to be eligible for consideration.
9. Entries become the property of the Kentucky Secretary of State's Office and will not be returned.
10. All guidelines must be met for any entry to be considered by contest judges.

Essay Prompt:

One of the most important responsibilities of citizens of the United States is to participate in their own government by voting for candidates who will represent their views in public office. But in the 2008 presidential election, only about 57 percent of those Kentuckians who were eligible fulfilled that responsibility.

Some countries have laws that make voting mandatory, while exempting certain adults based on factors such as age, illness, or religious belief. In such countries, eligible individuals who do not vote may be subject to penalties, such as fines or community service.

Your essay should discuss the following two questions:

- 1. Considering the pros and cons of compulsory voting, does such a law improve democracy?**
- 2. How would a mandatory voting law be affected by the First Amendment's guarantee of the freedom of speech?**

Mail entries to: ATTN: Slogan and Essay Contest
Office of the Secretary of State
Suite 152, State Capitol
700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

You may also submit entries online at www.sos.ky.gov/contests.

Note: Family members of employees of the Office of the Secretary of State or the State Board of Elections are not eligible to enter the Essay Contest.



Essay Rubric
24th Annual Essay and Slogan Contest
Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes

<u>(33.3%) Research and understanding of voting and the First Amendment</u>	
• Limited or no understanding	3
• Basic understanding of subject with minimal confusion	6
• Thorough understanding of the concepts presented in the prompt	9
• Mastery of the concepts with application of the importance of voting and the protection guaranteed by freedom of speech and of the press	12
<u>(33.3%) Idea development/support</u>	
• Minimal idea development; limited and/or related details	3
• Unelaborated idea development; unelaborated and/or repetitious ideas	6
• Depth of idea development supported by elaborated, relevant details	9
• Depth and complexity of ideas supported by rich, engaging, and pertinent details; evidence of analysis, reflection, insight	12
<u>(11.1%) Organization</u>	
• Random and/or weak organization	1
• Lapses in organization, focus and/or coherence	2
• Logical, coherent, focused organization	3
• Subtle and sophisticated organization	4
<u>(11.1%) Sentence structure</u>	
• Weak structure, weak verbs, incomplete sentences or run-on sentences, dangling participles	1
• Some structural weaknesses with weak verbs	2
• Minimal use of weak verbs, no incomplete sentences or run-on sentences	3
• Strong sentences, varied in length, sound verbs, minimal use of “there are”	4
<u>(11.1%) Grammar/Correctness</u>	
• Excessive errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar	1
• Some errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and grammar that do not interfere with communication	2
• Minimal errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar relative to length and complexity	3
• Control of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization	4



**24th ANNUAL ESSAY AND SLOGAN CONTEST
SECRETARY OF STATE ALISON LUNDERGAN GRIMES**

ESSAY CONTEST ENTRY FORM

All sections must be completed. If you choose to submit your essay online at www.sos.ky.gov/contest, you do not need to mail in your entry form.

_____ Name	_____ School
_____ Home Address	_____ School Address
_____ City, State & Zip	_____ City, State & Zip
_____ Home Phone Number	_____ School Phone Number
_____ Grade	_____ Principal
_____ Student Signature	_____ Sponsoring School Official Signature
_____ Date	_____ Date

All entries must be electronically submitted by 5 p.m. (EST) December 1, 2012, or postmarked by that date.

A special thanks to KEA and KEA Retired, Harp Enterprises Inc., Election Systems & Software, the University of Kentucky Scripps Howards First Amendment Center, and Kentuckiana Election Service Co. for sponsoring this program.