



ALISON LUNDERGAN GRIMES
SECRETARY OF STATE

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kentucky Educators
FROM: *Alison Lundergan Grimes*
SUBJECT: 2014-2015 26th Annual Essay and Slogan Contest
DATE: September 10, 2014

For the past 26 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 participation in the youngest demographics. The contest is an excellent way to garner recognition for your students, and it helps them become involved and familiar 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. 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, the University of Kentucky Scripps Howard First Amendment Center, the Kentucky Department of Education, and Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. The University of Kentucky Scripps Howard First Amendment Center also will judge 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 Cash 2nd Prize: \$600 Cash 3rd Prize: \$400 Cash</p>		<p>ESSAY CONTEST (Grades 9-12) 9th Grade: \$1000 Cash 10th Grade: \$1000 Cash 11th Grade: \$1000 Cash 12th Grade: \$1000 Cash</p>	

The Essay Contest prompt, rules, rubric, and entry form are attached to this Memorandum. Please visit www.sos.ky.gov/contests for further information and guidelines for the 2014-2015 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 12, 2014, or postmarked by that date. I hope you will share this information with any faculty you feel may benefit from it.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Bradford Queen in my office at bradford.queen@ky.gov or 502-782-7403. Thank you, and good luck to all of your students!



Essay Contest Rules and Prompt
26th 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 may be no longer than 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 12, 2014, or postmarked by that date.
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:

The government established by our Founding Fathers operates under the theory that citizens will participate in the democratic electoral process. That concept is reinforced by the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech and freedom of the press from interference by the government. The news media play an important role in elections, but the media may also introduce some problems. At one time, almost every newspaper in the United States was loyal to and was supported by one political party or another. Do you think today's voters would be better informed by news media if that were still the practice in 2014?

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
26th Annual Essay and Slogan Contest
Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes

<u>(33.3%) Research and understanding 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



**26th ANNUAL ESSAY AND SLOGAN CONTEST
SECRETARY OF STATE ALISON LUNDERGAN GRIMES**

ESSAY CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Submit this form with your essay. All sections must be completed. If you choose to submit your essay online at www.sos.ky.gov/contests, 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 12, 2014, or postmarked by that date.

A special thanks to KEA and KEA Retired, the University of Kentucky Scripps Howard First Amendment Center, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, and the Kentucky Department of Education for sponsoring this contest.