



ALISON LUNDERGAN GRIMES  
SECRETARY OF STATE

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kentucky Educators  
FROM: Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes  
SUBJECT: 2016-2017 28th Annual Essay and Slogan Contest

For the past 27 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. In addition, **a \$500 prize will be awarded to the school that has the highest participation rate.**

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 Harp Enterprises, Inc. 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)</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Prize: \$1000 Cash 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: \$600 Cash 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: \$400 Cash</p>		<p>ESSAY CONTEST (Grades 9-12)</p> <p>9<sup>th</sup> Grade: \$1000 Cash 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: \$1000 Cash 11<sup>th</sup> Grade: \$1000 Cash 12<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.sos.ky.gov/contests) for further information and guidelines for the 2016-2017 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 16, 2016, 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 Jacob Ewing in my office at [jacob.ewing@ky.gov](mailto:jacob.ewing@ky.gov) or 502-564-3490. Thank you, and good luck to all of your students!



**Essay Contest Rules and Prompt**  
**28<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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 16, 2016, 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:**

*Our government operates under the theory that citizens will participate in the democratic electoral process and will vote based on their knowledge of the candidates and the issues. That concept is enabled by the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech and freedom of the press by prohibiting government interference. If media critics were to start a movement to repeal the First Amendment, they might argue that inaccurate information broadcast on talk radio and cable talk shows and misleading political ads serve to confuse voters and corrupt the electoral process.*

*Write a response, (1) agreeing with the movement and suggesting changes to the First Amendment to solve the problems; or (2) disagreeing with the movement, focusing on what the Supreme Court of the United States described as a "profound national commitment to the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials.*

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](http://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**  
**28<sup>th</sup> 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



**28<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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 16, 2016, or postmarked by that date.**

**Entries must not include a student's name, school, or any other identifying information in the body of the essay.**

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