



Oratorical Scholarship Program

“A Constitutional Speech Contest”

The purpose of the Oratorical contest is to provide high school students with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, improving speaking skills, and acceptance of the responsibilities as well as the privileges of American citizenship. Contestants will compete for scholarship money ranging from **\$1,000 to \$2,000** at the department(state) contest conducted on Saturday, March 27, 2027, location to be determined. The department winner will advance to compete for scholarship money ranging from **\$20,000 to \$25,000** in the National contest held in Hillsdale, Michigan at Hillsdale College on May 14-16, 2027.

A contestant is encouraged to be sponsored by an American Legion Post but it is not required. If you don't know of an American Legion Post to ask for sponsorship, contact the Department Programs Coordinator by e-mail at legion@michiganlegion.org or by phone at (517) 220-2754 for assistance.

A contestant must register with the American Legion, Department of Michigan by Friday, **December 4, 2026**. Once you have registered with the Department of Michigan your information will be forwarded to your Zone Chairman and they will notify you of the dates, times and locations of all contests at the District and Zone level. All District contests are to be completed by January 24, 2027 and Zone contests will be conducted before February 27, 2027. The Department contest will be conducted on Saturday, March 27, 2027 at a location to be determined.

Eligibility: To participate in the Oratorical Contest you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Contestants shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.
2. Have a permanent residency in the state of Michigan
3. Be enrolled in an accredited high school (public, parochial, military, private) or an accredited home-schooled program.
4. Be in grades 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th and not older than 20 years-of-age.

What you should know:

- **Apparel:** Contestants may wear appropriate business attire but wearing uniforms, awards, or medals are not permitted.
- **Travel Expenses:** Department will pay mileage to and from the State Contest for only the first-place winner of each Zone contest. All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age.
- **Speaking Order:** A drawing will be held to determine the order in which the contestants will present their prepared oration and their assigned topic (two different speeches). Until the end of the contest, they will be introduced and known to the judges by number only.
- **Notes or Podium:** The use of notes, amplification devices, lectern, prop's or speaker's stand by contestants is **not** permitted.
- **Judges:** The judges are an integral part of the contest and are selected based on their qualifications. The decision of the judges is final. Five judges are used in the process, which ultimately results in the selection of the state champion each year.

What to Prepare:

The prepared oration: The Prepared Oration must be as follows:

- Given at each level of competition (District, Zone, State, National) and must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government but not the preamble.
- Contestant's oration must be his or her own original speech.
- Spoken in the English language.
- Speech length is no less than 8 minutes and no more than 10 minutes.
- Songs in a speech are not permitted.
- Quotations may be used and indicated as such but quotes 10 words or more in length will need the author's name given in your written manuscript and cited orally.

The assigned topic: The purpose of the assigned topic is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. The assigned topic must be as follows:

- Assigned Topic (listed below) will be one of the articles and sections or amendments of the Constitution of the United States.
- Spoken in the English language.
- Speech length is no less than 3 minutes and no more than 5 minutes.
- Songs in a speech are not permitted.
- Quotations may be used and indicated as such but quotes 10 words or more in length will need the author's name and cited orally.

The assigned topic will be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his/her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five minutes prior to the time of delivery.

ASSIGNED TOPICS FOR THE 2027 PROGRAM

The Preamble

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article VI Paragraph 2

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Amendment XIV Section 3

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Amendment XXII Section 1

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

State Oratorical Contest

The following information only applies to the State Oratorical Program:

- The State (Department) program will be held on Saturday, March 27, 2027 at a location to be determined. Starting time is 12:00 P.M.
- Scholarships are as follows: 1st Place- \$2,000, 2nd Place- \$1,500, 3rd Place- \$1,000
- All Zone winners should arrive by 10:30 a.m. to allow for a short walk through of the facilities.
- The winner of the State Contest will advance to the National Finals Contest (information is below)

If you have any further questions please contact the Department Programs Coordinator by e-mail at legion@michiganlegion.org or by phone at (517) 220-2754 for assistance.

National Finals Contest

The following information only applies to the National Program:

- National program held on May 14-16, 2027. Quarterfinal and semifinal contests are scheduled to be held on Saturday, May 15. The Championship is scheduled for Sunday, May 16.
- National Contest will be held in Hillsdale, Michigan at Hillsdale College.
- All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over the age of 21.
- All contestants and chaperones will arrive on Friday 14, and will be lodged on the Hillsdale College Campus.
- Mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will be held on the evening of Friday, May 14.
- Banquet honoring all contestants will be held the afternoon of Sunday, May 16.
- All contestants and chaperones will depart for home after the banquet on Sunday.

DEPARTMENT ORATORICAL REGISTRATION FORM IS ONLINE AT
[WWW.MICHIGANLEGION.ORG/ORATORICAL](https://www.michiganlegion.org/oratorical)

For a copy of the complete 2027 Official Rules, go to:
<https://www.michiganlegion.org/oratorical>