



American Legion, Department of Maryland

• Constitutional Scholarship Competition •

**For high school students who want to win scholarship money.
Participation requires oration on some phase of the
Constitution of the United States.**

Every year the American Legion sponsors an Oratorical Contest for high school students. The purpose of the contest is to develop knowledge and appreciation of the United States Constitution, the ability to think and speak clearly and critically, and the acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. In recent years, the American Legion has partnered with the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association and the National Speech and Debate Association to offer programs to young people interested in this sort of activity. They are awarded points for participation in the Legion contests.

Prepared Oration: Each contestant shall deliver a prepared oration, which must be an original effort. The oration must address some aspect of the Constitution of the United States, which emphasizes the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government.

Assigned Topic Discourse: In addition to a Prepared Oration, contestants must be prepared to speak on a specific article or amendment to the Constitution. The National office chooses four each year and contestants will prepare a speech for all four. However, only one is chosen, at random, during a contest and all contestants will speak on the same article or amendment.

National Contest: May 16-18, 2025 at Hillsdale College in Michigan. (www.Hillsdale.edu) Maryland sends one contestant to the first of the three National rounds. The top three national finalists earn berths in Original Oratory at the National Speech & Debate national tournament. National winners also win a trip to the National Convention in August.

- **Awards:** 1st place \$25,000, 2nd place \$22,500, 3rd place \$20,000.
- All state winners who participate in first-round National contests receive \$2,000 scholarships.
- All second-round contestants receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship.

State Contest: March 6, 2025, in Towson, Maryland. There may be up to eight competitors at this level. Not only does the winner of the state contest go to the national contest in May, but we look forward to you speaking at our state convention in Ocean City, on July 16-17, 2025.

- **Awards:** 1st place \$3000, 2nd place \$2000, Others \$750

District and Post Contest: The first round of competition may be at the Post or District levels, in January and February 2025. There are eight Legion districts in Maryland. Each district is comprised of between 4-6 counties but you can usually expect 2-4 competitors at this level. To be ready in January, Contestants must commit to and start to write, memorize, and practice their speeches by Thanksgiving break!

- **Awards:** District and Post scholarship or cash awards vary.

For details, rules, and eligibility information, contact us or review our website

mdlegion-oratorical.org **or email** Oratorical Chair Will Trotter, mdchaplain@comcast.net