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## JUAN WILLIAMS AND JOHN STOSSEL SUPPORT HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST ON BEING AN AMERICAN

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### ***Students and Teachers Can Win Up to \$5,000 and Washington, D.C. Trip in American Citizenship Essay Competition***

ARLINGTON, VA – The deadline for high school students and their teachers to submit essays for the Bill of Rights Institute's national [Being an American Essay Contest](#) is fast approaching. The contest asks students to share their thoughts on American citizenship by answering the question: "What civic value do you believe is most essential to being an American?"

The Essay Contest calls upon students to think about the greatest civic values in America. By encouraging students to consider and weigh American values, the Essay Contest serves as a key part of the Bill of Rights Institute's mission to educate young people about the words and ideas of America's Founders, the liberties guaranteed in our Founding documents, and how our Founding principles continue to affect and shape a free society.



2010-11 Contest  
Sponsor

Essay entries are due by 11:59 P.M. EST on December 1, 2010. Teachers must submit essays online at [www.BeingAnAmerican.org](http://www.BeingAnAmerican.org) for a chance to win cash prizes from a pool totaling \$115,000 and one of 54 all-expenses paid trips to the nation's capital (awarded both to teachers and their students). Supporting contest materials, including lesson plans meeting national academic standards, are provided at no cost to teachers who want to incorporate the essay topic into the classroom.

The names of the top three prize winners in the nine contest regions will be announced at a special Washington, D.C. Awards Gala in the spring of 2011. The first place winners in each region and their sponsoring teachers will each receive \$5,000 cash awards; second place winners \$1,000, and third place winners \$500. Honorable mention prizes of \$100 will be awarded to 7 students and teachers from each contest region.

The winners will also be treated to a tour of prominent national landmarks and will hear from a range of important voices on American citizenship. This year's keynote address to the winning students will be given by FOX Business Host John Stossel and author and FOX News Commentator Juan Williams will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Past years' winners met with Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, who keynoted the awards gala; retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; Pro Football Hall of Fame Cornerback Darrell Green; and FOX News Commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano.

"The Being an American Essay Contest encourages students to see how vital it is to the future of our country and Constitution that they embody key civic values every day," said Bill of Rights Institute Vice President of Education Programs Jason Ross. "By thinking about the civic values evident in our Founding documents and in the lives of American civic heroes, students can begin to see how their own actions are significant in supporting the experiment in self-government started by our Founders."

The contest, which has fast become the largest high school essay competition in the country, totaling over 100,000 student submitted essays, is hosted by the Bill of Rights Institute, an organization based in Arlington, VA, that provides free materials and a host of educational opportunities focused on civics and history for teachers and students across the country.

The contest is sponsored by the History Channel and the Stuart Family Foundation.

Visit the Being an American web site at [www.BeingAnAmerican.org](http://www.BeingAnAmerican.org) for complete rules and materials, including submission details, lesson plans and background information on the Constitution, Bill of Rights, Founders, and other Americans who have contributed to America's shared civic values.

FAST FACTS:

BEING AN AMERICAN ESSAY CONTEST

## 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR PARTICIPATING REGIONS:

- \* New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- \* Mid-Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
- \* South Atlantic: Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C.
- \* Mid-South: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- \* South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- \* Great Plains: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
- \* Great Lakes: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
- \* Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- \* Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, US Territories, American Armed Forces Schools Abroad

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Bill of Rights Institute, Arlington, VA.

The Bill of Rights Institute, founded in 1999, is a nonprofit educational organization. The mission of the Bill of Rights Institute is to educate young people about the words and ideas of America's Founders, the liberties guaranteed in our Founding documents, and how our Founding principles continue to affect and shape a free society.

FUNDING PROVIDED BY: History Channel (New York City, NY) and The Stuart Family Foundation (Chicago, IL).

CONTEST GOAL: To explore the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the civic values that unite us as Americans.

ESSAY QUESTION: "What civic value do you believe is most essential to being an American? Trace the enduring importance of this value throughout the American story by discussing: a Founding document that reflects this value; a figure from American history who embodies this value; and examples of how you have and/or could put this value into practice."

ELIGIBILITY: Students in grades 9-12 who are U.S. citizens or legal residents and are either attending public, private, religious, or charter schools, being home-schooled, or participating in a GED or correspondence school program but are no older than 19 years of age. Military bases and U.S. territories are also invited to participate.

ESSAY LENGTH: No more than 750 words.

## JUDGING CRITERIA:

- \* Adherence to Essay Question
- \* Originality
- \* Organization
- \* Writing Style
- \* Depth of Analysis

JUDGES: High school teachers

STUDENT CASH PRIZES: Ten cash prizes per region will be awarded to students:

- \* First Prize: \$5,000 each
- \* Second Prize: \$1,000 each
- \* Third Prize: \$500 each
- \* Seven Honorable Mentions: \$100 each

TEACHER CASH PRIZES: Ten cash prizes per region will be awarded to the teachers of the winning students:

- \* First Prize: \$5,000 each
- \* Second Prize: \$1,000 each
- \* Third Prize: \$500 each
- \* Seven Honorable Mentions: \$100 each

WASHINGTON, D.C. TRIP: The top three winners (first, second and third places) from each region, their teacher, and a guardian will be awarded an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. in the Spring of 2011.

CONTEST START DATE: September 1, 2010

DEADLINE FOR ESSAY SUBMISSIONS: December 1, 2010. All essays must be submitted by a high school teacher at [www.BeingAnAmerican.org](http://www.BeingAnAmerican.org).

WINNERS ANNOUNCED: Spring 2011

WEB SITE AND CONTEST GUIDELINES: [www.BeingAnAmerican.org](http://www.BeingAnAmerican.org)