

## North student wins \$1K in nation's largest essay competition

**Wicked Local North Attleborough**

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North Attleborough — A home-school student who attends classes at Good Company Tutorials in North Attleborough beat out more than 24,000 other participants for a top spot in America's largest high school essay contest conducted by the Bill of Rights Institute.

Representing the New England Region, Leah Rachel Bode, a junior at Good Company Tutorials, earned Second Place and \$1,000 in the fifth annual Being an American Essay Contest. The national competition is sponsored by the Bill of Rights Institute, an educational nonprofit based near Washington, D.C.

Bode's sponsoring teacher, Julie Shorey, received a matching cash prize.

In addition to the cash prizes, Bode and Shorey also won paid trips to the nation's capital, where they were honored on March 22 at an awards gala emceed by Juan Williams and featuring a keynote address by John Stossel. The Washington, D.C. trip also included a Capitol Hill luncheon and tours of the U.S. Capitol, Supreme Court, and National Archives.

"The Being an American Essay Contest encourages students to see how vital it is to the future of our country and Constitution that they live out 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 heroes, students can begin to see how their own actions are significant in supporting the experiment in self-government started by our Founders."

More than 80,000 students attending public and private high schools, and home-schooled students from all 50 states, have participated in the Being an American Essay Contest to date, with nearly half-a-million dollars in prize money being awarded to winning students and their teachers.

To participate, students were asked to share their thoughts on American citizenship by answering the following question: "What civic value do you believe is most essential to being an American?" 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.

In her winning essay, Bode selected "sacrifice" as the civic value topic of her essay and thought Anne Sullivan, instructor and friend of Helen Keller, most embodied the American character. In her essay, Bode wrote, "Daily, parents sacrifice their own comforts and desires because of their love for their children. Soldiers willingly lay down their lives to preserve the golden ideal; liberty. Teachers strive unceasingly to educate the next generation of Americans. As we strive to find our 'especial part' in this country, let each one of us ponder the inspiring and fiery words of Nathan Hale; 'I regret that I have but one life to give for my country.'"

More information on the Being an American Essay Contest can be found at [www.BillofRightsInstitute.org](http://www.BillofRightsInstitute.org). Copies of winning essays and photographs of students are available by request.