**Photos and/or interview of winning student available upon request.**

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Yakima Student Wins 1st Place and $1,000 in National High School Essay Contest

Teacher Also Receives Award

ARLINGTON, VA — A Yakima student won a top spot in a high school essay contest conducted by the Bill of Rights Institute. The Contest asked students, “How does the Constitution establish and maintain a culture of liberty?”

Representing the Western Region, Brandon Spicer, a homeschooled junior from Selah, earned 1st Place and $1,000 in the sixth 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.

Spicer’s sponsoring teacher, Ann Bowman, received a cash prize of $100.

“The Being an American Essay Contest is unique in that it gives students the opportunity to think about the important Founding principles communicated in our Constitution,” said Dr. Jason Ross, Bill of Rights Institute Vice President of Education Programs. “This contest is vital to helping students see their Founding principles as a meaningful part of the American experiment of self-government.”

More than 89,000 students attending public and private high schools, and homeschooled 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.

The Contest is sponsored by HISTORY® channel. “We are pleased to support the Bill of Rights Institute’s Being an American Essay Contest,” said Dr. Libby O’Connell, SVP, Corporate Outreach and Chief Historian, HISTORY® channel. ”The contest encourages students to think critically and truly makes the past relevant in their lives today.”
By encouraging students to consider how the Constitution establishes and maintains a culture of liberty, 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 his winning essay, Spicer, who selected “Limited Government” as the topic of his essay and thought Thomas Jefferson most embodied the selected Founding principle, wrote, “The Constitution established a culture of liberty. To maintain that culture, every American needs to take the time to learn about our nation’s founding principles, stay up to date on current events, and not be afraid to stand up when the government encroaches on our freedoms.”

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

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Founded in 1999, the Bill of Rights Institute 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 America’s Founding documents, and how the Founding principles continue to affect and shape a free society.