Who May Enter: Each contest is open to high school students in the United States and its Territories. Students in the 9th through 12th grades in public, private, parochial, and charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are invited to participate. Note: Children of federal judges, chambers staff, and employees of clerk's offices may not participate.

Entry Deadline: Entries accepted beginning December 1, 2017. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on February 28, 2018. Finalists will be selected in March, and the winners announced by March 30.

Disqualification: Providing false information, not meeting the submission deadline, or not providing a release form if requested may result in disqualification.

Prizes: First place winners of both the essay and the video contest will receive a $1,000 prize; second place winners of each contest will receive a $500 prize; and third place winners of each contest will receive a $300 prize.

Copyright: Adherence to copyright laws and fair use practices will be required. Please consult the resources page on this website – http://www.fedbar.org – for more information about how to legally make use of imagery, music and other materials created by others.

How to Enter:

Essay Rules

Length and Format: Essays should be between 500 and 1,000 words. While not required, proper use of footnotes and bibliographies will be credited during judging. Footnotes and bibliographies will not be included in the word count. Essays must be submitted electronically to this website –http://www.fedbar.org – as Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat documents. When entering the contest, you will be provided instructions for uploading your document.

Judging: Judging will be based on the following criteria:
• Understanding of constitutional principles: 40 points
• Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme: 30 points
• Grammar, spelling and composition: 25 points
• Use of footnotes, bibliographies: 5 points

Release Forms: Should you become a finalist in the contest, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the Federal Judges Association and the Federal Bar Association to publish your essay in print publications and on court public websites. In addition, contest winners will be required to provide and authorize use of photographs of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

Video Rules

Length and Format: The video should be from 3 to 5 minutes long (not including end credits). Submit as MOV, MPEG4, MPEG2, MPEG, AVI or WMV files. Resolutions of 720x486 pixels to 1920x1080 pixels are acceptable. Files may not exceed 1GB in size. Videos should be compressed using the H.264 codec. When entering the contest, you will be provided with instructions for uploading your video file.

Judging: Judging will be based on the following criteria:
• Demonstrates an understanding of the theme and constitutional principles: 30 points
• Exhibits originality and creativity: 25 points
• Clearly and effectively engages the viewer on emotional/subjective level: 25 points
• Displays good production values (audio/video quality, editing, etc.): 10 points
• Respects copyright rules, properly credits content sources: 10 points

Release Forms: Finalists will be required to submit a release form allowing the Federal Judges Association and the Federal Bar Association to display your video. Releases also may be required of individuals appearing in your video. Contest winners also must provide and authorize use of photos of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.