



NEWS ADVISORY

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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New York State Courts Launch Constitution Day Essay Contest to Promote Civic Engagement

NEW YORK—In celebration of the signing of the United States Constitution on this very date in 1787, the New York State Unified Court System (UCS) is launching an essay contest to highlight the importance of this vital document and inspire civic pride and engagement among young New Yorkers. The aim of the competition is to energize high schoolers statewide to critically examine the principles set forth in our nation’s Constitution. Essay contest participants will receive a Certificate of Participation and a pocket size U.S. Constitution, with the essays of the first, second and third place winners to be featured on the New York State Unified Court System’s public website.

“Civic education is key in shaping informed, responsible citizens who can actively engage in our democratic process. Through essay writing, students can explore how a deep understanding of civic duties and constitutional rights empowers them to effect meaningful change in society,” said Zenith T. Taylor, who was appointed in May 2024 as the court system’s first civic engagement coordinator, to foster civic literacy and participation, especially among New York’s youth.

Essay submissions must underscore the Constitution’s significance in fostering civic participation. Submissions must not exceed 500 words and only one submission per student is allowed. Each entry must be original and composed by the student submitting it; must not have won a prize before; and must not violate any copyright laws. Participants must email their essay as a PDF to civic-engagement@nycourts.gov with the subject line “Constitution Day Essay Contest.” **The submission deadline is October 27, 2024.**

The contest is open to high school students residing in New York State. Students whose parents or guardians are employed by the New York State Unified Court System are not eligible. The UCS strongly encourages students with disabilities to participate and is committed to providing the necessary accommodations to ensure a fair and inclusive contest.

Inquiries about the essay contest may be emailed to civic-engagement@nycourts.gov.

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