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NEWS RELEASE

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Civics Contest Finalists Announced

SAN FRANCISCO – Preliminary judging has been completed in the 2019 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest for high school students in the western United States, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. All told, over 1,300 young people entered the contest, which offers cash prizes and a chance to meet some of the nation's preeminent jurists and legal practitioners.

"The 4th Amendment in the 21st Century—What is an 'Unreasonable Search and Seizure' in the Digital Age?" was the theme of the contest. Students in grades 9-12 in public, private and parochial schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status were challenged to write an essay or produce a short video on the topic.

All of the 15 federal courts in the Ninth Circuit held local contests with winners going on to compete in the circuit-wide competition. In all, 45 essays and 26 videos were selected for final consideration by the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee, which will announce the winners later this month.

At the circuit level, prizes of $2,000, $1,000 and $500 will be awarded to first-, second- and third place winners in both the writing and video competition. In addition, first-place winners along with a parent/guardian will be invited to attend the circuit conference.

"Civics education is fundamental to help ensure that young people become knowledgeable citizens who understand and participate in our democracy. We are extremely pleased to have had so many students from many different places in the circuit participate," said U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino of San Diego, who chairs the Ninth Circuit Courts and Community Committee.

The Ninth Circuit takes in the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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District of Alaska – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska, which offered prizes of $1,000, $500 and $250 to the top three finishers. The essay winners are: 1st place, Olivia Tafs; 2nd place, Natalie Fraser; and 3rd place, Jessica Yang. All students are juniors from West High School in Anchorage. First place video winner is Scott Santaella, a senior at West High School. There are no 2nd and 3rd place winners.

District of Arizona – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, which offered prizes of $1,000, $500 and $250 to the top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions. The essay winners are: 1st place, Kellen Vu, a senior at Arizona School for the Arts in Phoenix; 2nd place, Alexander Rotaru, a senior at Dobson Montessori in Mesa; and 3rd place, Hannah Shin, a freshman at BASIS Oro Valley in Tucson.

The winners of the video competition are: 1st place, the team of Aubrey Huber and Cynthia Lopez , who are homeschooled students from Sahuarita with grade level equivalent to a sophomore; 2nd place, the team of Anthony Fishback and Colter Pauley, juniors at City High School in Tucson; and 3rd place, the team of Marlee Stephens, Chinle Reinshagen and Gabrielle Neilson, sophomores at Flagstaff Arts and Leadership Academy in Flagstaff.

Central District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, which offered prizes of $1,000, $750 and $500 to the top finishers in the essay competition and a trip to the circuit conference for the first-place winner. The essay winners are: 1st place, Aaron Wu, a senior; 2nd place, Jessica Chou, a senior; and 3rd place, Elle Yokota, a junior. All students are from Arcadia High School in Arcadia.

The winners of the video competition are: 1st place, the team of Michael Huang and Tanya Chen, seniors at Arcadia High School; 2nd place, the team of Aaron Wu, who also won 1st place in the essay portion of the competition, Jessica Chou and Maxwell Tong, seniors at Arcadia High School; and 3rd place, the team of Joseph Pimentel, Marc Carrillo and Yasmin Pineda, seniors at Rubidoux High School in Riverside.

Eastern District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California. The essay winners are: 1st place, Azeeta Bance; 2nd place, Katie Han; and 3rd place, Sarah Hoyle. All students are juniors at Benicia High School in Benicia. There are no video winners.

Northern District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. The essay winners are: Jayde Meng, a senior at Los Altos High School in Los Altos; Hannah Middler, a sophomore at Castilleja School in Palo Alto; and Priyanka Shingwekar, a senior at Irvington High School in Fremont. The winner of the video competition is Raveena Lele, a sophomore at Castilleja School.

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Southern District of California – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California, which offered prizes of $1,000, $500 and $250 to the top finishers in both the essay and video competitions. The essay winners are: 1st place, Cyrus Parson, a junior at The Learning Choice Academy in San Diego; 2nd place, Annaclare Splettstoeszer, a senior at The Cambridge School in San Diego; and 3rd place, Danielle Amir-Lobel, a junior at La Jolla Country Day School in La Jolla. The winners of the video competition are the team of D'Angelo Namou and Julian Jajo, seniors at Valhalla High School in El Cajon.

District of Guam – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Guam, which offered prizes of $150, $100 and $50 to the top finishers in both the essay and video competitions. The essay winners are: 1st place, Jenny Mann, a sophomore at St. Johns School in Tumon; 2nd place, Seyoung Choung, also a sophomore at St. Johns School; and 3rd place, Amber Babin, a senior at the Academy of Our Lady of Guam in Hagatna. The winners of the video competition are: 1st place, Isaiah Sutberry, a sophomore; 2nd place, Joshua Zink, a sophomore; and 3rd place, Hannah Sambrano, a junior. All students are from Guam High School in Hagatna.

District of Hawaii – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii, which offered prizes of $1,000, $500 and $250 to the top finishers in the competition. The winners of the essay competition are: 1st place, Trinity Myers, a senior at Iolani School in Honolulu; 2nd place, Elise Kuwaye, a senior at Kaimuki Christian School in Honolulu; and 3rd place, Caden Kunimura, also a senior at Kaimuki. The winners of the video competition are the team of Cassandra Carlyle and Akiko Iwata, juniors at Iolani.

District of Idaho – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho, which offered prizes of $1,000, $500 and $250 to top finishers in the competition. The essay winners are: 1st place, Maxwell Jewell, a freshman at East Junior High School in Boise; 2nd place, James Giffen, also a freshman at East Junior; and 3rd place, Jacob Mickelsen, a senior at Rigby High School in Rigby. The winner of the video competition is Liam Neupert, a sophomore at One Stone in Boise.

District of Montana – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana, which offered prizes of $2,000, $1,000 and $500 to the top finishers in both the essay and video competitions. The essay winners are: 1st place, Michael McKay, a senior at Corvallis High School in Corvallis; 2nd place, Zach Mangels, a junior at Skyview High School in Billings; and 3rd place, Nick Spinetta, a senior at Corvallis. The winners of the video competition are: 1st place, the team of Hannah Anderson and Morgan Paju of Glasgow High School in Glasgow; 2nd place, Connor Schnabel, a senior at Fort Benton High School in Fort Benton; and 3rd place, Landon Pfile, also a senior at Fort Benton.

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District of Nevada – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada, which offered prizes of $1,000, $750 and $300 to the top finishers in both the essay and video competitions. The essay winners are: 1st place, Ashlie Kemer, a senior at Veterans Tribute Center and Technical Academy in Las Vegas; 2nd place, Natalie Hsiao, a senior at Southwest Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas; 3rd place, Ananya Dewan, a senior at Northwest Career and Technical Academy in Las Vegas. The winners of the video competition are: 1st place, the team of Matthew Lovering, Jason Mueller and Colton Massic, all seniors at Spanish Springs High School in Sparks; 2nd place, the team of Alice Lim and Ethan Sax, seniors at Southwestern Career; and 3rd place, the team of Abigail MacDiarmid and Victoria Rivas, juniors at Spanish Springs.

District of the Northern Mariana Islands – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of the Northern Mariana Islands. The essay winners are: 1st place, You Sun Lee, a junior at Saipan International School in Saipan; 2nd place, Matt Jason Moran, a senior at Mount Carmel School in Saipan; and 3rd place, Bom Lee, a junior at Mount Carmel. The winners of the video competition are: 1st place, the team of Chenille Anne Geronimo, Marjorie Joy Agana and Nikka Nate, sophomores at Saipan Southern High School in Saipan; 2nd place, the team of Roma Malasarte, Rainalyn Reyes and Eddawn Labador, sophomores at Saipan Southern. There is no 3rd place winner.

District of Oregon – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the United States District Court for the District of Oregon. The essay winners are: 1st place, Olivia Caudell, a senior at West Salem High School in Salem; 2nd place, Rohan Menon, a junior at Westview High School in Portland; and 3rd place, Caleb Goodrich, a senior at West Salem. The winners of the video competition are the team of Jeff Mugleston, Tycho LeGrue and Jacob Burris, juniors at Willamette High School in Eugene.

Eastern District of Washington – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington. The essay winners are: Kody Richards, a sophomore at Wenatchee High School in Wenatchee, and Sonia Fereidooni, a senior at Pullman High School in Pullman. The video winner is Katarina Kenlein, a sophomore at Lewis and Clark High School in Spokane.

Western District of Washington – Finalists are the winners of a local contest sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, which offered prizes of $500, $350 and $250 to the top finishers in the competition. The winners are: 1st place, Jasper Chen, a junior at Roosevelt High School in Seattle; 2nd place, Jaquelin Nordhoff, a senior at The Overlake School in Redmond; and 3rd place, Benjamin Kitchen, a sophomore at The Downtown School in Seattle. The winner of the video competition is Liam Rebol, a sophomore at Bothell High School in Bothell.

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