**Announcing Class Essay Contest**

**“Why the Right to Vote is important to me and to our country.”**

**Brought to you by the Third Circuit Courts, Community, and Rule of Law Committee**



**This essay contest is open to all 5th and 6th grade Classes in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and U.S. Virgin Islands schools. This is a Class essay. One essay should be submitted on behalf of the Class.** **Class essays must be submitted on or before Friday, March 31, 2023**.

**Questions for class discussion to develop the class essay can include:**

* • ***Why are free and fair elections critical to our democracy?***
* • ***How does the right to vote affect our daily lives?***
* ***• What would happen if we did not have the right to vote?***
* ***• What happens in countries that do not have the right to vote?***
* ***• Are there court cases that uphold the right to vote?***
* **• *What can we do to encourage voting?***
* ***• How can your vote be good for others?***

**Teachers should feel free to contact the committee if they would like a lawyer or a judge to assist the class in the discussion or development of this topic.**

**Essay contest rules, contact information, and suggested resources follow.**

**2023 Essay Contest Rules**

**ENTRY DEADLINE**: Essay Contest opens December 5, 2022.

Entries must be submitted by 11:59 pm, March 31, 2023. Finalists will be selected in April.

**PRIZES:** Winners of the top three Class essays will be invited to participate in Law Week programs with federal judges and practitioners in area courthouses, covid conditions permitting.

**HOW TO ENTER:** Entry information can be accessed at https://www.ca3.uscourts.gov

Essays, in PDF format, must be submitted electronically to the mailbox for the courthouse closest to your school:

edpa\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov (Philadelphia and surrounding counties from Lancaster to Northhampton Counties)

mdpa\_harrisburg\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov mdpa\_scranton\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov

mdpa\_wilkes\_barre\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov mdpa\_williamsport\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov wdpa\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov (Pittsburgh and western counties) dnj\_camden\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov dnj\_trenton\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov

dnj\_newark\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov

dde\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov (Delaware)

dvi\_st\_thomas\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov

dvi\_st\_croix\_essay\_contest@ca3.uscourts.gov

**LENGTH AND FORMAT: This is a Class essay. One essay should be submitted on behalf of the Class.** The Class Essay should be submitted by the class teacher on behalf of a class as PDFs and include the teacher’s email and telephone. Essays should be typewritten and no longer than 500 words.

**JUDGING:** Essays will be judged on four criteria:

Focus, Content Development, Organization, and Style

Each criterion will be worth 25 points.

**CONTACT US:** Courts\_Community\_Rule\_of\_Law@ca3.uscourts.gov

or 267-299-4306

**Suggested Resources**

**Defining Voting Law**

1. Annenberg Public Policy Center: <https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/topics/voting/>
2. National Constitution Center: <https://constitutioncenter.org/education/videos/voting-rights-amendments-introductory-level>
3. Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/elections/right-to-vote/>
4. National Geographic: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/why-voting-important>
5. United States Courts: From Suffragist Sashes to Black Armbands: <https://www.uscourts.gov/news/2020/04/14/suffragist-sashes-black-armbands-law-day-distance-learning-focuses-role-courts>
6. USA.gov: <https://www.usa.gov/voting-laws>

**Relevant U.S. Cases**

1. *Smith v. Allwright*, 321 U.S. 649 (1944); available at <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/321/649/>
2. *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*, 383 U.S. 301 (1966); available at

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/383/301/>

1. *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections*, 383 U.S. 663 (1966); available at

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/383/663/>

1. *Katzenbach v. Morgan*, 384 U.S. 641 (1966); available at <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/384/641/>

**Constitutional Amendments on Voting Rights**

* 15th Amendment: <https://law.justia.com/constitution/us/amendment-15/>
* 19th Amendment: <https://law.justia.com/constitution/us/amendment-19/>
* 24th Amendment: <https://law.justia.com/constitution/us/amendment-24/>
* 26th Amendment: <https://law.justia.com/constitution/us/amendment-26/>