



Americans Against Gun Violence  
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## Announcement of 2018 High School Essay Contest

Open to All U.S. High School Students

Total Awards in the Amount of \$15,000

Sponsored by Americans Against Gun Violence

Note: Deadline for entry is 11:59 PM on Sunday, May 6, 2018

- *Essay Topic*
  - To enter the 2018 Americans Against Gun Violence Essay Contest, students must submit an original essay of 500 words or fewer describing their thoughts about the following quotation from the late Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, who said in a speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate in 1968, **“The time has now come that we must adopt stringent gun control legislation comparable to the legislation in force in virtually every civilized country in the world.”**
- *Contest Eligibility and Rules*
  - Contestants must be high school students attending school in the United States or its territories.
    - Students who entered high school on track to graduate in 2018 but who graduated early are also eligible.
    - Direct relatives of Americans Against Gun Violence Board members, employees, and paid consultants are not eligible.
  - Contestants are encouraged to discuss the essay topic with teachers, parents, friends, and other mentors, but each contestant must write the essay himself or herself, in his or her own words.
  - Contestants who are under the age of 18 must have the consent of a parent or legal guardian to enter the contest.
  - To enter the contest, students must submit their essays and demographic information via the online entry system available on the [Americans Against Gun Violence website](http://www.aagunv.org).<sup>i</sup>
  - Essays may include a title and footnotes, but these elements are not required. Titles and footnotes do not count toward the 500 word limit.

- The deadline to enter the contest is 11:59 PM on Sunday, May 6. Late entries will not be accepted unless the delay was caused by a malfunction of the Americans Against Gun Violence server or online entry system.
- *Selection of Scholarship Winners*
  - Twelve contest winners will be selected from the essays submitted.
  - The Board of Directors will establish a panel of Americans Against Gun Violence members to judge essays based on accuracy, originality, clarity, cohesiveness, and overall impact.
  - Essay readers will be blinded to all student identifying information.
  - The judging panel will select 10 finalists and two alternates finalists, and the Board of Directors and/or a committee of members appointed by the Board will select the first, second, and third place winners from among the 10 finalists.
  - Contest winners will be notified by email<sup>i</sup> by June 4, 2018.
  - At the time that students are notified that they've been chosen as contest winners, they'll also be sent a signature form that includes the following elements:
    - A statement that the essay submitted by the student is his or her original work
    - A statement signed by a parent or legal guardian if the student is under age 18 confirming that the parent or guardian approves of the student's participation in the essay contest
    - A statement by a school official confirming that the contestant is a high school student or that the student entered high school on track to graduate in 2018 but graduated early
  - In order to receive a monetary award, the 10 finalists and two alternate finalists must return the signed signature form within 30 days of being notified that they are contest winners.
    - Students don't need to submit the signature form at the time that they enter the contest. If their school will be out of session by June 4, 2018, though, it's recommended that contestants get the signature of a school official documenting that they are high school students prior to the end of the 2017-2018 academic school year. The blank signature form may be downloaded from the [Americans Against Gun Violence website](#).
- *Contest Awards (Total \$15,000)*
  - Upon submission of their completed signature forms, the first place winner will receive a \$3,000 award; second place a \$2,500 award; and third place a \$2,000 scholarship.
  - The other seven finalists will each receive \$1,000 cash awards, and the two alternate finalists will receive \$250 apiece.
  - If one or more of the finalists does not submit a completed signature form within 30 days of being notified that he or she is a contest winner,

the lower ranked finalists and alternate finalists who have submitted their signature forms will be moved up in ranking, and the total \$15,000 in awards will be distributed accordingly.

- Awards will be sent by check to the home address listed on the students' entry forms.
- *Publication of Essays and Release of Contact and Identifying*
  - By entering the contest, students agree to allow Americans Against Gun Violence to publish their essays in part or in whole in any way that the Board of Directors deems to be appropriate, but without any student contact or identifying information linked to the essays.
  - Americans Against Gun Violence will not publish or release any student contact or identifying information without the written consent of the student and, if the student is under age 18, the written consent of a parent or guardian.
  - When the 10 finalists and two alternate finalists are notified that they have been chosen as contest winners, they will be provided with release forms to indicate to what degree, if any, they wish to have their contact and identifying information released in association with their essays.
  - The responses to the release forms will not in any way influence the choice of the first, second, and third place contest winners.

#### *Summary of Essay Contest Timeline*

- The deadline for entering the contest is 11:59 PM on Sunday, May 6, 2018.
- The students selected as the 10 finalists and two alternate finalists will be notified by Monday, June 4, 2018.
- Students must return completed signature forms within 30 days of being notified that they have been chosen as contest winners. We will mail award checks to the winners upon our receipt of their completed signature forms.

For additional information or questions, please email [essaycontest@aaqunv.org](mailto:essaycontest@aaqunv.org) or call (916) 668-4160.

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<sup>i</sup> An exception to this rule will be considered for students who do not have access to a computer and/or access to the internet. If students do not have computer or internet access, they must contact Americans Against Gun Violence by telephone at 916-668-4160 or by U.S. mail at P.O. Box 661252, Sacramento, CA, 95866 at least two weeks prior to the contest entry deadline to arrange an alternate method of submitting their essays and demographic information.