

Dear

I am writing to share with you an exciting program we have to reach out to youth in our area. Every year, Mecosta/Osceola Right to Life, Inc. sponsors an oratory contest for high school students. This event involves researching, writing and presenting a 5-7 minute speech on abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, stem cell research or cloning. Our contest will be held this year on April 14.

Students receive several benefits from participating in our oratory contest. In addition to building confidence in their public speaking abilities, they gain experience with critical thinking and constructing persuasive arguments.

Along with educational benefits, the top three contest winners receive monetary prizes of \$100, \$75, and \$50 respectively. Our first place winner will advance to the state contest sponsored by Right to Life of Michigan in May. The winner of that contest will compete with other teens from across the country at the National Right to Life Committee oratory contest in Virginia.

Please encourage involvement in this wonderful opportunity. After receiving a student's application form, we will contact them to provide contest rules, location of the contest, and further details. The enclosed materials will help you promote this event. I am also available to make brief presentations to classrooms, youth groups or any other gathering and would be happy to set up a time to do so. Please contact me at 231-796-7782, or peggydbrennan@gmail.com if you have any questions about our program.

Sincerely,

Peggy Brennan
Mecosta/Osceola Right to Life, Inc.

2020 Oratory Contest Rules and Information

Contest Rules

1. Eligibility: To compete in the state and local contests, contestants must be in grades 9-12 as of February 1, 2020. To compete in the national contest, students must be a junior or senior. If the state's first place winner is in grade 9 or 10, he/she will win the first place prize, and the highest scoring student in grade 11 or 12 will advance to the national contest. In case of non-traditional students or home-school students, the school must recognize the student as in the equivalent grade or the year the student will enter college will be used to determine eligibility.
2. Students can only compete in one local affiliate contest in a contest year.
3. Contestants are to research, write and present an original prolife speech on the issue of abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or embryonic stem cell research (including human cloning if desired). The speech should address one of these topics directly, using other topics only as support. Copyrighted speeches are not allowed. Contestants must use entirely new speeches if they compete in multiple years. Speeches must be typed in full and submitted with the contestant's application.
4. Because the speech is to be an oration, appropriate gestures are allowed. The style and speech type should be appropriate to the message, but the speech must not be a dramatic presentation (e.g. portrayal of a baby in the womb, short story, poem). Quotes are fine but should not dominate the speech and must be appropriately attributed. Props are not permitted.
5. The speech should appeal to a broad audience, including those who may not be prolife.
6. Speeches are to be 5 to 7 minutes in length. Penalizing speeches outside the 5 to 7 minute range is left to judges' discretion. Speeches under 4 or over 8 minutes will be disqualified.
7. When using facts and statistics, contestants should use current information available from reputable sources. Contestants may be penalized by judges for using inaccurate information.
8. Judges score speakers on a 10-point scale in each of these five criteria: thesis/structure, content, understanding/coverage of prolife topics, presentation and the judges' overall opinion.
9. Speech content may not be significantly changed as a contestant advances, though fine-tuning for minor corrections, timing, etc. is allowed and encouraged. A copy of the winner's speech is forwarded to the state and national levels to ensure that no major changes have been made.
10. Memorization is not required and it is acceptable for contestants to use notes or refer to their written speeches if necessary. Though not required at the national level, most speeches are memorized.
11. Contestants will have the option to use a podium and a microphone at the state contest if available. Microphones are generally not allowed at the national contest.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When are the local and state contests?

- A: 1. Affiliates set their local date. Affiliates should submit the local contest sponsorship form by Friday, January 24. Local contests are usually held in late February or March. All local contests should be finished before the Friday, April 10th due date for submitting local results.
2. The state contest will be on Saturday, May 16th, 2020 in Holt, Michigan.

Q: When and where is the national contest?

- A: The national contest will be held on June 27, 2020 during the National Right to Life Convention in Herndon, VA.

Q: What are the prizes?

- A: 1. Local prizes are left to the discretion of affiliates, though suggested prizes are \$100, \$50 and \$25 for the top three winners. In addition to cash prizes, groups might offer framed certificates, roses, precious feet pins, t-shirts, tickets to affiliate events and other items to all contestants.
2. State prizes include a small gift for all participants, monetary awards of \$500, \$300 and \$200 and medals for the top three winners, and an expenses-paid trip to the national contest for our national contest entrant and a parent/guardian.
3. National prizes are \$1,000, \$750, \$500 and \$250 for the top four winners. In addition, the first-place winner will receive tickets to the National Right to Life Convention banquet the night of the contest and will be asked to give his/her speech at the banquet.

Q: Where can students obtain resource materials for their chosen topics?

- A: Newspapers, libraries and the Internet are great sources of information. Right to Life of Michigan's website RTL.org is an excellent resource. Right to Life of Michigan Educational Resource Centers also have resources available. Ambitious students might also contact staff at local crisis pregnancy centers or hospices for an inside perspective on life issues. Contestants should avoid using research that would not be acceptable in a paper assigned for a class (e.g. Wikipedia).

Q: What if our local contest winner can't attend the state contest?

- A: The runner-up in the local contest may compete in the state contest should the winner be unable to attend. The deadline for local contest coordinators to notify the state oratory coordinator of the runner-up's substitution and to submit the runner-up's speech is Wednesday, April 15.

Q: Can last year's contest winner participate in next year's contest?

- A: Local and state contest winners are not excluded from participating. Students winning first place in the national contest as juniors are not allowed to compete again nationally their senior year, but are welcome to participate in the state contest.

Q: Why are freshman and sophomores not allowed to compete nationally?

- A: National Right to Life sets the rules for the national contest and has decided against allowing them to participate.

Right to Life of Michigan Educational Fund 2020 High School Oratory Contest

Contest Application Form

(Please print legibly)

Contestant Name: _____

Address/City/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Birthdate: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Parent e-mail address: _____

School Name: _____

School Address/City/ZIP: _____

School Phone: _____ Grade (2019-2020 school year): _____

Prolife issue you will be speaking on (choose one):

☐ Abortion ☐ Embryonic Stem Cell Research (or Cloning) ☐ Euthanasia ☐ Infanticide

*Student Signature _____

*Parent Signature _____

*By signing, you agree to allow Right to Life of Michigan to publicize contest results including your information (name, grade and hometown), speech, contest photos and videos, as well as provide your contact information to any news media interested in stories about contest winners.

Return this form by the entry deadline to your local coordinator:

Local Contest: Macosta/Osceola Right to Life, Inc

Local Coordinator: Peg Brennan Phone: 231-796-7782

Address/City/ZIP: 1038 N. 4th Ave, Big Rapids, 49307

Entry Deadline: March 31, 2020 Local Contest Date: April 14, 2020



2020 Oratory Contest Ballot

Speaker: _____ Time: _____

Affiliate area: _____

Please note 10 is the highest score.

Thesis/Structure: How well is the speech laid out at the beginning? Does it have clear thesis? Does it make you want to hear more? Does the conclusion sum up main points of the speech?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Score:
Comments: _____

Content: Does it have a logical, clear organization? Good word usage? Is each point relative to topic, factually correct and substantiated?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Score:
Comments: _____

Understanding/Coverage of Pro-life Topics: Does it send a persuasive pro-life message aligning with the mission of Right to Life of Michigan?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Score:
Comments: _____

Presentation: Appropriate eye contact, audibility, rate of delivery, fluency, voice inflection, tone, gestures, appearance, pronunciation, general sense of confidence, etc?

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Score:
Comments: _____

Overall:
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Score:
Comments: _____

Judge's Signature _____

Total Score: