Ohio State Bar Association *There Ought To Be A Law Essay Contest*

**Overview**
The Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) and a number of local bar associations have teamed up to coordinate a statewide Law Day project. Focusing on how laws are developed, the project asks students (grades 7–12) to write about what they believe “ought to be a law.”

Essays will be judged on the local level by participating local bar associations and OSBA Law Day Planning Committee members. OSBA-appointed judges will identify regional finalists who will compete at the state level. A luncheon to honor regional finalists will be held in May, and prizes will be awarded for the 7th and 8th grade division, the 9th and 10th grade division and the 11th and 12th grade division.

**What is Law Day?**
Established by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1958, Law Day celebrates the American heritage of liberty, justice and equality under the law. Every year, Law Day provides legal professionals and others with opportunities to help students and the public understand how the law protects our freedoms.

**Contest Objectives and Guidelines**
The goal of the *There Ought To Be A Law Essay Contest* is to help students develop the skills, attitudes and values they need to become responsible and influential citizens. Thinking through and writing about the process of developing a law is a tangible way for students to participate in the annual Law Day celebration. The contest is open to Ohio students in grades 7 through 12 during the 2005–2006 academic year.

Each student participant must write an essay of 1,000 words or less proposing a new rule or law to be enacted at the school, community, county, state or national level. Each essayist is asked to adhere to the following guidelines:

1) Propose a **new** law that, to the student’s knowledge, is not currently in effect.

2) Use for topic ideas, **but do not copy**, any proposed or pending legislation. Information about past, current and pending legislation is available through the OSBA Web site at www.ohiobar.org (search in “Public” area under “Links”).

3) **Do not use topics covered by place winners in the 2004–2005 contest.** *(View or download 2004–2005 place-winning essays at www.ohiobar.org; search in “Public” area under “Programs”/”Law Day Essay Contest”).*  
4) Place-winning topics from the ’04–’05 contest are:
   - school funding and unfunded mandates;  
   - school starting time;  
   - pet restraint in motor vehicles;  
   - mandatory community service for students;  
   - federal responsibility for educational equality;
• compulsory high school class on credit and loans.

4) Explain fully the proposed law by:
• clarifying what the law would do or change;
• exploring the benefits and consequences of the proposed law;
• anticipating the proposed law’s impact on existing rules or laws as well as the law’s impact on those who would be affected;
• explaining why the law needs to be created and who will enforce the law;
• telling where the law would be effective.

5) Submit a typewritten essay in a 12-point font and include:
• the student’s name, address, phone number and grade level;
• the student’s county of residence and local bar association name (if applicable);
• completed parental release form (if student is under 18);
• school name, address, phone number, and educator’s name (if applicable);
• documentation of all research on the enclosed Works Cited page or an attached sheet (if applicable).

Resources
Visit the Ohio State Bar Association Web site at www.ohiobar.org (search in “Public” area under “Programs”/“Law Day Essay Contest”) and download lesson plan materials to help students understand the lawmaking process and how to propose an effective law. Make arrangements for a local lawyer to visit your classroom by contacting the Ohio State Bar Association’s Public Relations Department at (800) 282-6556 or (614) 487-2050.

Selection criteria
All entries will be judged according to the criteria described in the “Contest Objectives and Guidelines.” Entries will be judged on three levels: local, regional and state. Winning essays from local-level contests will be sent on for regional judging. Regional finalists will be invited to Columbus for a recognition luncheon, and their essays will be considered for state-level competition.

State-level Prizes*

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<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>1st Place</th>
<th>2nd Place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11th and 12th grade division</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$400</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th and 11th grade division</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th and 9th grade division</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$150</td>
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* Awards are in U.S. Savings Bonds. Winnings essays will be posted on the OSBA Web site: www.ohiobar.org (search in “Public” area under “Programs”/ “Law Day Essay Contest”).

**Contest Entering Process:**
The contest is open to all Ohio students in grades 7–12, whether or not their schools participate in the contest.

**Essays from participating schools:**
- Students from participating schools will submit essays to a school official (teacher, administrator, etc.) for pre-selection.
- **EACH SCHOOL WILL SUBMIT NO MORE THAN ONE ESSAY PER DIVISION TO THE OSBA.**
- School submissions should include:
  1. essays and corresponding entry forms, including any source citations and parental release forms (if applicable);
  2. a list of all other students who prepared essays for this contest. (The OSBA would like to recognize the efforts of all participants.)

**Essays from students whose schools are not participating or who are home-schooled:**
- Students whose schools are not participating or who are not affiliated with a school may send entries directly to the OSBA for consideration.
  1. A student in this category must indicate in the appropriate space provided on the entry form that his or her school is not participating or that he or she is not affiliated with a school.
  2. A student who is affiliated with a non-participating school must provide the school’s name, address, and telephone number. (Note: If more than one entry is received from a non-participating school, that school may be contacted for pre-selection.)

**Mail or fax your entries to:**
There Ought To Be A Law Essay Contest
OSBA Public Relations Department
P.O. Box 16562
Columbus, Ohio 43216-6562
FAX: (614) 487-1008

**Restrictions**
The Ohio State Bar Association’s *There Ought To Be A Law Essay Contest* is subject to all federal, state and local laws and regulations and is void where prohibited.

**Deadline**
To be eligible for regional and state competition, essays must be mailed or faxed to the OSBA and postmarked by **January 31, 2006**. The OSBA bears no responsibility for loss
or damage to entries. All entries submitted to the OSBA become the property of the OSBA.

Questions
Contact Debby Cooper, OSBA Public Relations Department at (800) 282-6556, (614) 487-4425 or dcooper@ohiobar.org.

Note: This entry form may be copied and distributed. Also, all other essay contest materials may be copied and distributed for educational purposes.

Thanks to the Ohio State Bar Association Law Day Planning Committee:

Tim Bowers - Liberty Center High School
James Faust - Lynchburg-Clay High School
Dwight Groce - Columbus City Schools
Peter Hahn - Buckingham Doolittle & Burroughs, OSBA New Lawyers Section
Diana Ramos-Reardon - Office of Criminal Justice Services
Mike Sammons - Ohio Center for Law Related Education (OCLRE)