



April 11, 2016

Dear School Administrator:

We are pleased to present your sophomore and junior students with an opportunity to participate in one of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's premiere education activities. Each year the Spouses of the Congressional Black Caucus Members partner with CBCF to volunteer and dedicate their time and talents to creating educational opportunities to prepare our future leaders.

We invite qualified African American students from the districts of Congressional Black Caucus Members to participate in our Essay Contest and Issue Forum. Students are presented with a topic that embodies some of our communities' most pressing issues and are asked to write an essay to defend their research, analyses and opinion. Submissions are judged by a special committee of CBC Spouses. Winners and their families are invited to Washington, DC in September to accept their awards and attend a panel discussion on the topic during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference (CBCF-ALC).

Last year essay contestants wrote passionately about the issue of youth involvement in social justice movements. High-school students from all over the country shared how young people could initiate and intensify movements for change in a variety of pressing areas. At an issue forum at Banneker High School, students engaged in a very lively and emotional dialogue with informed panelists. This year, the topic will focus specifically on youth civic engagement.

2016 Essay Contest Question:

YOU ARE THE FUTURE

When we look around our communities, we see things that can be improved and require addressing. High levels of unemployment, attacks on public education, rising levels of crime among our young people and an indifference to the political process are just a few of those issues. At the same time, we also see a decline in civic engagement among youth. As a future leader of your community, what does community engagement and involvement mean to you? How can you get involved with both political and non-political processes to move your community forward?

All written essay submissions are due by Monday, June 20, 2016. Winners will be selected on or before Friday, August 5, 2016. The first place winner will receive \$1,500; second place will receive \$1,000 and third place will receive \$750. **All three finalists will receive airfare and hotel accommodations to and from Washington, D.C. to attend a congratulatory luncheon and the issue forum that follows during the CBCF's Annual Legislative Conference in September.**

We need your assistance to make this year's essay contest a success. Please disseminate this information, along with the Essay Contest Rules and Guidelines and the Essay Contest Submission Form attached, to your students and faculty as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Deidre Ellis at (202) 263-5712.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Tonya Veasey
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus Spouses



Rev. William E. Coleman
Chair, Essay Contest & Issue Forum

Cc: Essay Contest Rules and Guidelines
Essay Contest Submission Form

ESSAY CONTEST RULES AND GUIDELINES

Eligibility

- Essay contest is open to high school **sophomores and juniors (grades 10 and 11) at time of submission of essay.**
- Essay contestants must reside in a district represented by a Congressional Black Caucus Member.
- Contestants should identify as Black or African American.

General Rules

- All essays must be submitted **online**. All required information must be provided.
- Contestants must compose an original written essay with limited guidance from adults and teachers.
- The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) will have the right to publish, in full or in part, or otherwise duplicate any essay entered in the contest, along with the author's name, without payment to the author.
- The Essay Submission Form must be typed and accompany the written essay.
- All entries must be received by **Monday, June 20, 2016 at 11:59 PM EST.**
- Winners and runners-up will be notified **on or before Friday, August 5, 2016**

Written Essay Guidelines

- All written essays must be submitted **online** or by using the following link: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EOBCT=4a2d3db9bb4d466daa59242d5e39b338>. All required information must be provided as indicated on the online submission form.
- Written essays will not be accepted by US mail, fax or email. All submissions must be made online via the link provided to the essay contest application form.
- Written essays must be typed, double-spaced.
- Written essays should be original compositions; no less than 750 words, and no more than 1000 words with evidence that supports their findings.
- Written essays will be judged on overall content, quality, universality, style and grammar and alignment with contest theme.

2016 Essay Question:

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ESSAY CONTEST SUBMISSION FORM

(This form must be typed. Be sure to include this form with your essay submission via the online link below.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

HIGH SCHOOL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER _____

GRADE LEVEL (at time of submission) _____

PRINCIPAL NAME _____

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR NAME _____

I understand that if my essay is chosen as one of the winners, I must be available to attend the CBC Spouses Essay Contest and Issue Forum on September 15, 2016 in Washington, DC. *(Travel expenses will be paid by CBCF.)*

I certify that I have read and that I understand the above statement.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

I certify that the above-named student is a sophomore or a junior at the above-named high school.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S SIGNATURE

EMAIL ADDRESS

HOW TO ENTER:

1. Complete this Essay Contest Submission Form.
2. Click [here](#) to submit your essay online or go to:
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=4a2d3db9bb4d466daa59242d5e39b338>
3. Complete the **online submission form** as instructed.
4. Be sure to include this **Essay Contest Submission Form** with your entry.
5. Essay submissions must be made by **June 20 @ 11:59pm (EST)**.

CBCF will not accept essay submissions by fax, mail or delivery.