

Lincoln Essay Competition 2020

TOPIC 2020: "The legitimate object of government is 'to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they can not, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves'."

-- Abraham Lincoln

The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln edited by Roy P. Basler, Volume II,
"Fragment on Government" (July 1, 1854?), p. 221.

Identify one issue facing Vermont that you think your state government (the Scott administration and/or the legislature) should address. Describe the challenge and its negative impacts. Then explain why governmental action is appropriate, suggest one or more actions that state government should take, and explain why you think such action would improve the situation.

Congratulations to the 2020 Hildene Lincoln Essay Competition winners!

Students advocated for a wide range of actions they thought the state should take. We received 167 applications from all over Vermont. A first, second, and third place winner was chosen from each of four regions and four honorable mentions were selected from the combined pool of finalists. If you are one of the applicants, whether or not your essay garnered an award, you are to be congratulated. It was clear to all the judges that every single one of you put a lot of thought, time and effort into your writing.

As always, blind judging was done by a panel of judges based on the content, the student's understanding of the subject and their ability to convey that understanding using good writing practices including style, composition, grammar and factual accuracy. Hildene applauds all who participated.

All participants will receive a letter in the mail, along with guest passes to visit Hildene. Once the Covid-19 crisis has passed, we hope you will all come and enjoy the many pleasures that Hildene's 214 bucolic acres have to offer. It will be wonderful to see you. In the meantime, on behalf of Hildene and all of the LEC judges, I thank you for the reassurance and hope each of your essays has given us that Vermont has a bright future indeed. We encourage you to continue to hone your communication skills and to remain civically engaged. I have no doubt that you will make Vermont, and the world, an even better place.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Moffett-Hynds
Programming Director

2020 WINNERS

**REGION ONE:
Grand Isle, Franklin, Orleans, Essex, Lamoille,
Caledonia, Washington Counties**

FIRST PLACE, \$500

Destiny Thompson

Destiny proposed a mandatory state system for unbiased inspections of rental properties yearly in order to address substandard housing.

St. Alban's City School, St. Albans; Teacher: Meredith Vaughn

SECOND PLACE, \$400

Rowan Clough

Rowan outlines ways the state could help ensure the preservation of Vermont's natural landscape.

Harwood Union Middle School, South Duxbury; Teacher: Sarah Ibson

THIRD PLACE, \$300

Una Colby

Una advocates for more rehabilitation facilities to treat opioid addicts.

Gilman Middle School, Lunenburg; Teacher: Kelsey Wilkinson

**REGION TWO:
Chittenden County**

FIRST PLACE, \$500

Isaac Doggett

Isaac proposes that every doctor in VT be required to complete the buprenorphine training course in order to better address opioid use disorder.

Edmunds Middle School, Burlington; Teacher: Jeremy DeMink

SECOND PLACE, \$400

Eleuthera Barr-Brandt

Eleuthera urges the state to pass legislation to exempt all menstrual supplies from taxation, categorizing these necessities instead, under Medical Equipment & Supplies.

Edmunds Middle School, Burlington; Teacher: Jeremy DeMink

REGION TWO, cont.

THIRD PLACE, \$300

Vivian Halladay

Vivian urges the state to challenge the federal law that prohibits safe injection sites, in order to reduce overdose deaths and increase treatment outreach.

Edmunds Middle School, Burlington; Teacher: Carole Renca, Librarian

**REGION THREE:
Addison, Rutland, Bennington Counties**

FIRST PLACE, \$500

Christopher Alfano

Christopher urges the state to lower taxes and revise Act 250 so that more young people will move to Vermont to fill jobs and start new businesses.

Maple Street School, Manchester Center; Teacher: Conor Welch

SECOND PLACE, \$400

Eliza Doucet

Eliza advocates for 12 weeks of paid parental leave for all Vermont parents, paid for by implementing a state disability insurance program.

Red Cedar School, Bristol; Teacher: Jacquie Werner-Gavrin

THIRD PLACE, \$300

Lily Hutcheson

Lily would like to see a bill that would restrict or ban plastic bottles (except during emergencies).

Hiland Hall School, Bennington; Teacher: Brennan Cofiell

**REGION FOUR:
Orange, Windsor, Windham Counties**

FIRST PLACE, \$500

Delia Morgan

Delia would like the state to have a mandatory weekly or monthly farm visit program for all school children in order to inspire students to become farmers and to ensure the future of farming in Vermont.

Upper Valley Waldorf School, Quechee; Teacher: Amy P. Fredland

REGION FOUR, cont.

SECOND PLACE, \$400

Nicole Pereira

Nicole contends that the state take measures to incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, & implicit bias training for all teachers, staff & students and for the curriculum to more adequately reflect the diversity of human experience.

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro; Teacher: Jessica Montenieri

THIRD PLACE, \$300

Elias Zamore-Cohen

Elias advocates for stronger background checks and DEI training for judges and police officers, in order to address the implicit bias that contributes to the unacceptably high incarceration rate of African-Americans in the state.

Brattleboro Area Middle School, Brattleboro; Teacher: Jessica Montenieri

HONORABLE MENTIONS, \$200 each

Aiden Decker

Aiden urges the state to cut taxes in order to spur job growth, stimulate the state economy, and retain workers.

Otter Valley Union Middle/High School; Teacher: Cameron Perta

Sarah Jane Gregory

Sarah Jane encourages the state to implement a mandatory waiting period of at least 24 hours for gun purchases.

Christ the King, Rutland; Teacher: Melissa Ciranni

Aoife Crainich

Aoife argues that diversity education be mandatory for grades K-12 and include curriculum to explore unconscious bias.

Edmunds Middle School, Burlington; Teacher: Erin Tinti

Hannah Cunningham

Hannah encourages the state to implement a pilot program for inmates in order to reduce recidivism.

Edmunds Middle School, Burlington; Teacher: Robyn Battaile