

Learning Law and Democracy Foundation

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We the People... the Citizen and the Constitution*
Simulated hearings on the U.S. Constitution

**MINNESOTA STATE COMPETITION
AND SHOWCASE**

December 9, 2009
9:00 am – 2:30 pm (approximate)
Minnesota State Capitol

St. Paul, Minnesota

Thank you very much for working so hard to increase your students' understanding of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. As a member of the We the People community we are excited to invite your students to participate in *We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution Minnesota State Competition and Showcase*. This event will highlight the knowledge gained by the students using the "We the People" materials by providing them with an opportunity to show their knowledge in a simulated congressional hearing that is judged by lawyers, judges, political figures, and community leaders. At the conclusion of the day, awards will be presented and a team will be selected to represent Minnesota in the National We the People Competition in Washington DC, Spring 2010.

We are thrilled to hold this event at the Minnesota State Capitol! Because your students will be participating in their hearings for only a short period of time, we will be arranging related activities to make the remainder of your time at the State Capitol educational and entertaining. Although the legislature will not be in session, many legislators will be available to meet with your students. We will help you make these arrangements!

NEED BOOKS? Complimentary classroom sets of the We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution Level 3 student textbook are available. To order, email jbloom@civicallyspeaking.org.

*This national program is funded by the United States Congress and administered by the Center for Civic Education, with a grant provided to support the Minnesota We the People program.

Participation

The culminating activity for the **We the People** program is a simulated congressional hearing. The students, working in cooperative teams, prepare and present statements before a panel of community representatives who act as congressional committee members. Students then answer questions posed by the committee members. The format provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles.

The Minnesota We the People Program offers two ways in which your students may participate in the *We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution Minnesota State Competition and Showcase*.

Constitutional Scholars The students in your class will study all six units. They will share their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution by dividing into six teams with each team answering questions from one of the six units. Each team will prepare answers for both unit questions but will be asked by the judges to respond to only one question. Students may participate at the high school or junior high/middle school level. The team that will be selected to represent Minnesota in the National We the People Competition must compete in all six units at the high school level.

Constitutional Fellows Students will study one to five units. They will study some but not all of the We the People materials and will show what they know by dividing into teams, answering questions from as many units as desired (but less than all six). You and your students select the units. In addition, as teacher, you may select one of the two questions from each unit. This limits the amount of time students will need to prepare and makes it possible for students to participate when the course curriculum does not include all content of the We the People textbook. Constitutional Fellows are not eligible to represent Minnesota in the National We the People Competition. Constitutional Fellows choosing to prepare for only one of the two unit questions will not be eligible for Unit Awards.

We the People Hearing Procedure

Four-minute opening statement

Students answer one of the two unit questions (including the sub questions). This statement is prepared in advance, often written on note cards. The judges select the question they will ask unless students are participating as Constitutional Fellows and have chosen to answer only one of the unit questions.

Six-minute follow-up questions

Students answer additional judges' questions related to their opening statement. Students may not use notes for this part.

Feedback and Evaluation

Judges share comments with students and complete written evaluation forms for each team. Teams will receive numerical scores.

Schedule of Events

As much as possible, all unit teams from a school will participate during the same ½ hour block of time. Times will be assigned first come, first served, with consideration given to teacher preference when possible. This provides less down time and more time for your class to participate as a group in other exciting activities. Students will receive lunch vouchers for the Cafeteria in the Minnesota Transportation Building, a short walk from the State Capitol, accessible by tunnel.

Rules for Competition

Please read carefully the Rules for Competition. These rules are consistent with the rules of the National We the People Program.

Registration/Getting Help

To register, complete the Registration Form. For more information, contact Jennifer Bloom at the Learning Law and Democracy Foundation (jbloom@civicallyspeaking.org) or call 651-772-4276.

We the People Coordinators are also available to help you get involved. Feel free to contact them.

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December 9, 2009

Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul, MN

REGISTRATION FORM

Teacher Name _____

School _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Confirmation, map, other information will be mailed to your home address.

Home Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____ **Email** _____

My students will be participating as:

- Constitutional Scholars (prepared on all 6 units)
_____ Grade Level
- Constitutional Fellows (prepared on units: _____)
_____ Grade Level

Students will receive We the People medals in recognition of their work. Please estimate the number of students who will participate so that we can order a sufficient number.

_____ Number of students

Mail to: LEARNING LAW AND DEMOCRACY FOUNDATION
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Phone: 651-772-4276 FOR MORE INFORMATION or
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REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 14, 2008