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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

## **News for Immediate Release**

Jan. 19, 2016

### **National essay contest challenges students to write about Miranda rights**

**HARRISBURG** — “You have the right to remain silent...”

#### **What are Miranda rights, and why are they important?**

That question is being posed to students in the third through 12<sup>th</sup> grades this year as courts across the country promote the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) 2016 Civics Education Essay Contest.

In Pennsylvania the Supreme Court’s Commission on Judicial Independence is supporting activities surrounding the third annual national contest. It is promoting participation in the essay contest and encouraging teachers to educate students about *Miranda v. Arizona* and incorporate the contest question into lesson plans.

The theme was selected since 2016 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Miranda rights,” from the landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Miranda v. Arizona*.

“Students are likely to be familiar with the basic concept of Miranda rights,” said Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor, “given the great impact of this decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the criminal law arena, and the many media portrayals of law enforcement activities.

“This contest, however, encourages them to think about and comment upon *Miranda* rights substantively. Over the years, the Miranda decision has engendered substantial debate, and it will certainly be interesting to learn the opinions of Pennsylvania youth about the doctrine and its continuing import. Pennsylvania’s judiciary joins the NCSC in encouraging students to participate in this contest.”

Winners are slated to be announced on May 1, in commemoration of Law Day.

Submissions will be divided into three groups: third-through fifth-graders; sixth-through eighth-graders; and ninth-through 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. Entries for all grade levels must be 100 words or less and typed and submitted online at [www.ncsc.org/contest](http://www.ncsc.org/contest). Handwritten submissions will also be accepted and may be sent to

National Center for State Courts  
c/o Deirdre Roesch

300 Newport Ave.  
Williamsburg, Va. 23185

Prizes will be awarded. All submissions are due Feb. 26, 2016.

Complete contest details and the [contest flyer](#) are available at [www.ncsc.org/contest](http://www.ncsc.org/contest). A summary of the case and the Court's opinion may be found at: [www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-miranda-v-arizona](http://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-miranda-v-arizona).

The [Pennsylvania Commission on Judicial Independence](#) is dedicated to fostering a better understanding of the role of the courts. Created in response to a nationwide pattern of attacks on the courts and judicial rulings, the commission raises public awareness of the importance of a strong, independent judiciary in a free society. It promotes the teaching of civics and monitors threats on judicial independence in Pennsylvania and around the nation. The commission is comprised of 10 members who are appointed by the Supreme Court. Members include state and federal judges, law professors and lawyers.

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