



## 27th annual (2025-26) Public policy essay contest

### Purpose and contest rules

#### Purpose

- To promote church-wide awareness of significant public policy issues by highlighting Anabaptist youth perspectives
- To promote youth understanding of the relationship of faith to public policy
- To promote greater awareness of the work of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries and increase the number of policy advocates

#### Contest rules: General

- Prizes will be awarded as follows: one Essay Winner will be selected for a prize of \$1000. Honorable mentions will be awarded \$250. MCC reserves the right not to award the prize if no eligible submissions are received during the contest. The Essay Winner is individually solely responsible for all federal, state and local taxes that may be applied to the prize monies.
- Submissions may be in either English or Spanish.
- No purchase or entrance fee of any kind is necessary to enter.
- Contest is open to Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ and other Anabaptist youth of high school age and to all youth who attend Anabaptist high schools within the United States, including Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.
- Current MCC staff and board members and members of their immediate families (parents, spouses, siblings, and children) are not eligible for the contest.
- [Additional resources are available on the “Resource list” online.](#)
- The MCC U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries will announce winners by April 25, 2025.
- MCC is not responsible for any troubleshooting or other technical difficulties experienced relative to submission. Not all essay entries will receive confirmation of receipt, particularly those emailed to MCC regional offices. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt and wish to confirm that your essay was successfully submitted, please email [npjm@mcc.org](mailto:npjm@mcc.org).
- By entering the contest, the entrant agrees to be bound by each and every contest rule and may receive exposure by MCC. MCC reserves the sole and exclusive right to edit submissions as well as change and post revised contest rules with notice provided to entrants.
- Each entrant agrees that their participation and submission shall be governed by and construed under and in accordance with the laws of the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia. The exclusive jurisdiction and venue shall be federal and state courts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, located in the county of Lancaster, as well as the District of Columbia.

#### Contest rules

- Essays shall be 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. In addition, each entrant shall include, on a separate page, a letter to Congress of up to 200 words, encouraging them to consider the student’s policy recommendations.

- All essays must be written by the student in their own words and reflect their original thinking. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to generate or compose essays is not permitted. However, students may use AI responsibly for limited purposes such as checking spelling, grammar, formatting, or conducting research. Any misuse of AI that replaces the student's own writing or analysis will be considered a violation of this policy.
- Essays must be submitted electronically as an attachment to an email by **11:59 pm Eastern time on February 27, 2026** to your regional MCC office (see map below). The entrant's name and any other identifying information shall appear only on the first page of the document, which must be a cover sheet that includes the essay title, entrant's name, mailing address, email address, home congregation, school name and current grade level. Please also include an electronic headshot photo (at least 1200x1800 pixels), noting who took the photo. The photo may be included in news releases or other publicity under the circumstance that the entrant is awarded the grand prize.
- Essays will be judged anonymously. Each regional office will appoint one or more judges to select the best essays from their region. The top regional essays will be reviewed by designated MCC U.S. staff, who will select the national winner.

**Essay entries must be e-mailed by 11:59 pm Eastern on February 27, 2026, and submitted to your regional MCC office:**

MCC Central States  
centralstates@mcc.org

MCC East Coast  
eastcoast@mcc.org

MCC Great Lakes  
GreatLakes@mcc.org

West Coast MCC  
westcoast@mcc.org

