



Purpose and Guidelines

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 MCC's Washington Office and expand the base of Anabaptist policy advocates

Guidelines

- Prizes will be awarded as follows: Grand prize \$1,000; three (3) honorable mention prizes of \$500 each.
- The winner will also be provided the opportunity to visit her/his local congressional office, accompanied by an MCC staff person.
- Contest is open to Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and other Anabaptist youth of high school age and to all youth who attend Mennonite high schools within the United States and Puerto Rico.
- Immediate family members of current MCC staff or board members are not eligible for the contest.
- Essays should be 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-in. margins.
- Each student may submit only one essay. Essays should be submitted electronically, as an attachment to an email. The student's name and any other identifying information should appear only on the first page of the document, which shall be a cover sheet that includes the essay title, student's name, mailing address, email address, home congregation, school name, and current grade level.
- Essays will be judged anonymously.
- Resources are available from the MCC U.S. Washington Office web site at <http://mcc.org/get-involved/advocacy/washington/contest>.
- Essays must be e-mailed or postmarked by January 26, 2018, and submitted to your regional MCC office (see map below).
- The MCC U.S. Washington Office will announce winners by March 29, 2018.
- Entries will be judged on content (demonstrated understanding of the issues), clarity (writing style) and creativity (imaginative and thoughtful policy positions).

Entries must be e-mailed or postmarked by January 26, 2018, and submitted to your regional MCC office:

MCC Central States
121 East 30th Street
P.O. Box 235
N. Newton, KS 67117
kkw@mcc.org

MCC East Coast
900 E. Howell St.
Philadelphia, PA 19149
eastcoast@mcc.org

MCC Great Lakes
1013 Division Street
Goshen, IN 46528

GreatLakesOffice@mcc.org

West Coast MCC
1010 G Street
Reedley, CA 93654

westcoast@mcc.org



Topics (students should select ONE of the following):

Climate change

In 2015, there was much hope for addressing global climate change when 195 countries committed to the Paris climate accord. In June 2017, President Trump pledged to pull the U.S. out of the agreement.

Is it still possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. to help mitigate the effects of climate change? If so, how?

- *Understanding of the issue (40 points total)*
 - How is climate change affecting vulnerable communities in the U.S. and in other parts of the world? Why is it important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? (15 points)
 - What, specifically, did President Trump announce with regard to U.S. participation in the Paris climate accord? How will this be carried out and how long could it take? (5 points)
 - How many countries have signed the Paris agreement? Has it gone into force? What two countries did not sign the agreement and why? (10 points)
 - What emissions reductions did the U.S. commit to as part of the Paris agreement? Will the U.S. still meet these targets? (10 points)
- *Problem solving (40 points total)*
 - How should our Christian and Anabaptist values influence our response to this situation? (10 points)
 - In the absence of federal action, give some examples of what states, cities, and companies have pledged to do in order to help meet the U.S. targets for emissions reductions. (10 points)
 - How can individuals encourage state and local officials to take more of these types of actions? (10 points)
 - What else can individuals do to help meet U.S. targets for reducing emissions? (10 points)
- *Writing style (20 points) – Essays will be granted up to 20 points for writing style, grammar, spelling and citation.*

Mass incarceration

Although the U.S. claims to value freedom, the U.S. incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. Mass incarceration continues to put a strain on communities, budgets and progress toward criminal justice reform.

How has “the war on drugs” impacted mass incarceration in the United States and what can be done to

reverse the trend?

- *Understanding of the issue (40 points total)*
 - When and why was “the war on drugs” introduced? (15 points)
 - What is meant by the term “mass incarceration”? (10 points)
 - How has the “war on drugs” disproportionately impacted people of color? (10 points)
 - Of the many offenses that make up the federal prison population, what percentage are drug offenses? (5 points)
- *Problem solving (40 points total)*
 - What federal policies should be changed in order to reduce the impact of “the war on drugs” in the criminal justice system? (15 points)
 - What are some alternatives to incarceration? (15 points)
 - How should our Christian values influence our response to mass incarceration? (10 points)
- *Writing style (20 points) – Essays will be granted up to 20 points for writing style, grammar, spelling and citation.*

Foreign assistance

The United States has been a leader in global assistance, supporting humanitarian relief and poverty-focused development programs. The president and some in Congress, however, have recommended significant cuts to U.S. foreign assistance.

What factors necessitate foreign assistance and why might it be important for the United States to assist other countries?

- *Understanding of the issue (40 points total)*
 - What percentage of the budget is committed to foreign assistance? (5 points)
 - What are some of the types of foreign assistance? Which agencies manage U.S. foreign assistance funding? (10 points)
 - What are some of the arguments for and against poverty-focused foreign assistance? (10 points)
 - What have been some of the impacts of foreign assistance? (15 points)
- *Problem solving (40 points total)*
 - How might the U.S. government best respond to poverty around the world? What motivations or factors should drive this response? (15 points)
 - What types of foreign assistance should the U.S. government prioritize? (5 points)
 - How do your Christian values shape your perspective on poverty-focused assistance? (10 points)
 - What are several ways in which we as U.S. Christians can help alleviate global poverty? (10 points)
- *Writing style (20 points) – Essays will be granted up to 20 points for writing style, grammar, spelling and citation.*