

**Announcing the 2017 Scott Johnson Open Government High School Essay Competition
Sponsored by the Washington Coalition for Open Government and Stokes Lawrence Law
Firm**

CONTEST RULES AND TIMELINE

This contest is intended to help educate young people about the importance of open-government and to honor the memory of Scott Johnson, a former Washington Coalition for Open Government board member and attorney with Stokes Lawrence.

Essay Contest Information:

The 2017 topic:

“In what ways is it important for citizens to have access to government records and meetings, and what are the perils if citizens are denied access? Cite actual examples of benefits and perils to support your position.”

In addition to clearness of expression and thought, essays will be judged on the entrants' understanding of the issues of transparency, accountability and the public's right to know. Prospective entrants should be encouraged to explore the coalition's website at www.washingtoncog.org to gain familiarity with WCOG's work. They should also be encouraged to study the state's Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act to learn about transparency and what the law requires.

Submitted essays must be 400 to 600 words and represent the original work of the contestant. Care must be taken to avoid plagiarism. All references must be attributed.

All high school students, grades nine through twelve, in all Washington public and private high schools, as well as home-schooled students at the equivalent stage of their education are encouraged to submit an entry.

The winner will receive a \$1,000 prize and an honorary one-year non-voting membership on the board of the Washington Coalition for Open Government. Other awards may be made at the discretion of the judges and with approval of the WCOG board of directors. The award(s) will be presented to the winners in their home school districts before the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

Students are also encouraged to submit their work to their own high school newspaper AFTER THE ENTRY DEADLINE HAS PASSED.

- Entry deadline is May 15, 2017.
- **Entries must be emailed to info@washingtoncog.org**
- Essays may be sent as plain text in the body of the email, or as Word or PDF attachments.

- Each email entry should include the entrant's name, age, home address, telephone number, email address, the school currently attended. *Only one entry per student is allowed.*
- The decision of the judges is final and non-reviewable.
- All essay entries become property of the Washington Coalition for Open Government and may be reproduced and distributed as the organization sees fit, including publication on the group's website.
- By submitting an essay, each entrant grants permission for WCOG to use his or her name and photograph for publicity purposes, including announcement of the winners.

The 2017 winner will be notified by WCOG in May and presented with the award in May or June, as appropriate.

For more information about the contest or the Washington Coalition for Open Government, contact info@washingtoncog.org.