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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**2020 Scott Johnson HS Essay Contest winner from Colbert, WA**

The Washington Coalition for Open Government is pleased to announce the winner of the 2020 Scott Johnson High School Essay Contest is Abigail Wilkes of Colbert, WA. Wilkes' essay *Why the Government Must Be Transparent* answered the question "what would America be like with no laws requiring government to hold open public meetings, provide open public records, and operate open courts? Would you want to live in such a country? Why or why not?" and was selected from a field of 25 entries, according to WCOG Executive Director, Juli Bunting.

*"We had excellent entries from all over the state this year and our judges had a challenge facing them. But after giving careful consideration to all the entries, we were able to agree Abigail's essay was our choice and we heartily congratulate her on this work."*

The Washington Coalition for Open Government administers the contest which provides the winner a cash prize of \$1,000 each year, sponsored by the Stokes Lawrence Law Firm. Scott Johnson was an attorney with Stokes Lawrence, a former WCOG board member, and an advocate of open government until his untimely death in October of 2012, just before being sworn in as a King County Superior Court Judge.