



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The American Legion, Department of Nebraska

afwashburn@windstream.net

Contact: Amanda Washburn - 402-464-6338

Columbus Freshman Wins State Oratorical Contest

Sarah Lasso, a freshman at Columbus High School, earned first-place at the 82nd annual American Legion Oratorical Contest held on January 11 at the Ramada Inn in Kearney. She was awarded a check from the Nebraska American Legion for \$1,100.

The competition includes an eight to ten-minute rehearsed speech on an aspect of the Constitution by each competitor and then three to five-minute speech on an assigned article of the Constitution.

MicKael Halverstadt, Thayer Central High School, placed second and was awarded \$700; Grace Brennemann, homeschooled, placed third and was awarded \$500; and Simon Podliska, Creighton Prep High School, placed fourth and was awarded \$300.

Lasso will now compete at the National Oratorical Finals on April 17-19 in Indianapolis, Indiana against state champions from across the United States and France and Germany. The first day of competition will narrow the field of participants down to the "Final Three" who will square off against each other the following day. The three finalists will receive scholarships of \$20,000, \$17,000, and \$15,000 from The American Legion.

Since its inception in 1919, The American Legion has been a key advocate for veterans' benefits, patriotic American values, instilling values in young people through numerous programs, and a strong nation defense with focus on quality-of-life issues for those serving in today's armed forces. The youth Oratorical Competition is part of the Americanism pillar and helps to educate our youth on government.

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