

2024-2025 Official Entry Form

Voice of Democracy Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Sarai E Darden

Name: First, M.I., Last

785 Donington Circle

Address

Lawrenceville, Ga, 30045

City, State, Zip

(1) 7705193830 saemda01@icloud.com

Phone

07/01/09

Email

10

15

XL

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Age

Jacket Size

Archer High School, Lawrenceville, Ga

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable)

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian

(Required even if student is 18 or over)

Keisha Darden

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Keisha Darden

10/22/24

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

(1) 4045936170

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone

snc114@yahoo.com

Parent/Guardian Email

Participant Agreement for Students Advancing to National Level

If selected as a first-place state winner, I have the consent of my parent/guardian and school to attend the Voice of Democracy National Finals in Washington, D.C. as a guest of the VFW National Organization. In consideration for permission to participate in the National Voice of Democracy Competition ("Competition") I do hereby, for myself, for my heirs, executors, administrators and assignees, waive, release and discharge all rights and claims which I have or which may hereafter accrue against the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and/or the Departments (state organizations) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their respective officers, agents, successors and assigns from any damages which may be sustained by me in connection with my participation in or association with the Competition and/or arising out of any travel related to the Competition. In the event of sickness, accident or injury in connection with the Competition, I consent to and accept the services of a duly licensed medical, surgical or dental specialist selected on my behalf and for such treatments, as they may deem necessary. I understand that VFW will not be liable for such treatment. I further understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States retains non-exclusive rights to use my audio file, essay, name and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

I Have Read and Understand the Rules and Participant Agreement

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have not inappropriately used any AI tools or Chat GPT. I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible. I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

Signature of Student Participant

10/22/24

Date

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post Level Voice of Democracy Competition.

Gregg Morrison, JVC 4180

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature

Post #

VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (if applicable)

PO Box 392465

Post Address

Shelville, GA 30339

City, State, Zip

VFW 4180@gmail.com

VFW Post Email

No. of students participating

8

No. of winners advanced to District

3

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarship awards \$

325

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) \$

93

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Voice of Democracy Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Departments.

District Chairperson Signature

Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

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Phone

Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairperson

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Voice of Democracy Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature

(1)

Daytime Phone

Email

The winner ☒ has been ☐ will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on _____.

For assistance contact:

816.968.2787

Email: youthschohships@vfw.org

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: Gregg Morrison, JVC

Phone: 770-656-3780

Best Time To Call: 12-1800

Alternate Contact: Donald Franklin, CDR

Phone: 770-972-8612

Best Time To Call: _____



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Is America Today Our Forefathers' Vision?

The America of today is no doubt incredible. There are many more technological advancements and human rights than before, like technology that grants us the ability to study life and disease, or the freedoms and rights previously restricted from females or minority groups that are now available in a world the forefathers hoped to be possible, like the right to vote or basic human rights. This was, no doubt, within their vision. But is the current America what our forefathers truly fought for?

The America we live in today supports people of majority groups, yet undermines the hard work of minorities. We live in an America where people of minority groups still have to fight for their rights and fight to be heard. An America where, sure, people have the right to bear arms, but should they? An America where children don't feel safe going to school, or adults going to work. The very same America where our ancestors fought for the very rights we have that are under constant threat of being revoked. My answer to whether current day's America was our forefathers' vision, is no.

Our forefathers wanted us to live a life of peace and prosperity, but can such a goal be accomplished if no one works towards it? There's nothing we can do about the hateful beings in the world aside from trying to change their views, but even that is not guaranteed success. What would show the most success would be working towards a common goal, one our forefathers laid out for us from the beginning, a life of love and peace of mind. The Constitution is a prime example of our forefathers' goals for this country. Our constitutional rights were a way for our forefathers to give us a life of freedom. One fewer people experienced during their time.

But it's not just our founding fathers who should be considered influential and inspirational forefathers, but all of those who impacted current society's shaping. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s impactful speeches and movements started the fight for civil rights and equality. Claudette Colvin, a lesser-known African American woman, protested segregation by remaining seated

in her bus seat despite being told repeatedly to move. Henry Gerber founded The Society for Human Rights in 1924, the first organization to fight for gay rights. The combined efforts of not just men, but women too, were each one step closer to a better America. One they envisioned and fought for. Each of our forefathers, or rather forepeoples' efforts has guided America to its current state, and it is up to us to drive America to an even better state. It is without doubt that America is far better off than most other countries, offering a better life or opportunities that might never have existed elsewhere.

Additionally, there is no doubt that America still has its flaws, just like anything else. Our forefathers would be proud of how far we've come but would work to better it. America is not perfect and never will be, but we can work to get it the closest this country has ever been to perfect.