



April 28, 2014

Dear School Administrator:

We are pleased to present your sophomore and junior students with an opportunity to participate in one of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's premiere education programs. Each year the spouses of the African-American Members of the United States Congress partner with CBCF to volunteer and dedicate their time and talents to creating educational opportunities to prepare our future leaders.

We invite qualified students from the districts of Congressional Black Caucus Members to participate in our Essay Contest and Issue Forum. Students are presented with a topic that embodies some of our communities' most pressing issues and are asked to write an essay to defend their research, analyses and opinion. Submissions are judged by a special committee of CBC Spouses. Winners and their families are invited to Washington, DC in September to accept their awards and attend a panel discussion on the topic during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference (CBCF-ALC).

Last year essay contestants wrote passionately about the issue of bullying. High School Students from all over the country shared how they could lead anti-bullying efforts in their schools and communities to affectively decrease the incidences of bullying. At an issue forum at Banneker High School, over 400 students engaged in a very lively and emotional dialogue with informed panelists. This year the topic will focus specifically on **cyberbullying**, which has become more prevalent in recent years.

We are also very excited to introduce a new technological element to the contest. Students will be invited to submit an original essay OR a video essay on the topic. Tech savvy teens will have the opportunity to showcase their creative video production talents.

2014 Essay Contest Question:

Last year alone, more than one million children were harassed, threatened or subjected to other forms of cyberbullying on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. (Based on Consumer Reports). Students as young as 3rd grade report seeing frequent bullying online. The psychological and emotional results of cyberbullying are similar to those of real life bullying. The difference is, real life bullying often ends when the school day ends. For children subjected to cyberbullying, there is no escape. Access to the internet and other forms of technology offer bullies increasing security and seemingly limitless tools to harass their victims through varying mediums. What can schools, parents and most importantly young people do to raise awareness and put a stop to cyberbullying?

All written and video essay submissions are due by Tuesday, June 10, 2014. Winners will be selected on or before Friday, August 1, 2014. The first place winner in each category will receive \$1, 000; the runner-up in each category will receive \$750. **Winners and runners-up will receive airfare and hotel accommodations to and from Washington, D.C. to attend a congratulatory luncheon and the issue forum that follows.**

We need your assistance to make this year's essay contest a success. Please disseminate this information, along with the Essay Contest Rules and Guidelines and the Essay Contest Submission Form attached, to your students and faculty as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Tracie C. Flowers at (202) 263-2840.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Mereda Davis Johnson
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus Spouses



Mrs. Mariama Carson
Chair, Essay Contest & Issue Forum

Cc: Essay Contest Rules and Guidelines
Essay Contest Submission Form

ESSAY CONTEST RULES AND GUIDELINES

Eligibility

- Essay contest is open to high school **sophomores and juniors (grades 10 and 11)**.
- Essay contestants must submit an essay in one (1) of two categories: written **OR** video. **Each contestant is permitted to submit one (1) essay in one (1) category. A contestant is not permitted to enter an essay in both categories.**

General Rules

- All video and written essays must be submitted **online**. All required information must be provided.
- The Essay Contest will be divided into 2 (two) categories of competition: written essay and video essay.
- Contestants must compose an original written essay and/or video essay with limited guidance from adults and teachers.
- The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) will have the right to publish, in full or in part, or otherwise duplicate any essay entered in the contest, along with the author's name, without payment to the author.
- All entries must be received by **Tuesday, June 10, 2014.**
- Winners and runners-up in each category will be notified **on or before Friday, August 1, 2014.**

Written Essay Guidelines

- All written essays must be submitted **online** or by using the following link: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=bee0cc08c51d4c668ead1b634264a285>. All required information must be provided as indicated on the online submission form.
- Written essays will not be accepted by US mail, fax or email. All submissions must be made online via the link provided to the essay contest application form.
- Written essays must be typed, double-spaced.
- Written essays should be original compositions; no less than 750 words, or no more than 1000 words with evidence that supports their findings.
- Written essays will be judged on overall content, quality, universality, style and grammar in alignment with contest theme.

Video Essay Guidelines

- All video essays must be submitted **online** or by using the following link: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=bee0cc08c51d4c668ead1b634264a285>. All required information must be provided as indicated on the online submission form.
- Video essays will not be accepted by US mail or email. All submissions must be made online via the link provided to the essay contest application form.
- Video essays must be no more than 3 minutes in length, including all credits and sources used.
- Video essays must be created for the purpose of this essay contest and may not have been submitted to any other contest, or otherwise used for any other public purpose.
- Video essays must completely be the original work of the entrant. Any artwork, or background music, must be copyright free or created by the entrant. Artwork or background music must be cited in the submission form.
- Video essays must be appropriate for viewing by a broad audience (no inappropriate visuals, language, or music).
- All music sources must be listed in the credits.
- Students may use Soundzabound.com for royalty free music provided to schools. (Videos containing copyrighted music or materials will not be accepted.)
- PowerPoint, etc. may be used in place of video formats/equipment.
- File size should not exceed 2 GB.
- Videos essays should have a 16:9 or 4:3 ratio with a resolution of at least 640 x 360 or 640 x 480.
- Video essays may be posted onto YouTube and submitted via video link or URL address. (***Videos must be submitted as a private link. For additional information about private links, please visit <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/157177?hl=en>.***). The link to the video should be included on the **online essay contest application form** in the space provided.
- Video essays will be judged on overall content, originality, creativity, use of language (grammar/mechanics) and alignment to contest theme.

Note: Because of the large size of the file, you will not be able upload the actual video file online. However, you will be required to provide the link or URL to access the video.

ESSAY CONTEST SUBMISSION FORM

(This form must be typed. Be sure to include this form with your essay submission via the online link below.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

HIGH SCHOOL _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

SCHOOL PHONE _____ FAX _____ GRADE LEVEL _____

GRADE LEVEL _____

PRINCIPAL _____

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR _____

I understand that if my essay is chosen as one of the winners, I must be available to attend the CBC Spouses Essay Contest and Issue Forum on September 25, 2014 in Washington, DC. *(Travel expenses will be paid by CBCF.)*

I certify that I have read and that I understand the above statement.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

I certify that the above-named student is a sophomore or a junior at the above-named high school.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S SIGNATURE

EMAIL ADDRESS

HOW TO ENTER:

1. Complete the Essay Contest Submission Form.
2. Click [here](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=bee0cc08c51d4c668ead1b634264a285) to submit essay online or go to:
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=bee0cc08c51d4c668ead1b634264a285>
3. Complete the **online submission form** and upload your video or written essay as instructed.
4. Be sure to include this **Essay Contest Submission Form** with your entry.
5. Essay submissions must be made by **June 10 @ 11:59pm (EST)**.

CBCF will not accept written or video submissions by fax, mail or delivery.