

2016 RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

Sponsored by the Religious Liberty Council of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty

Entry forms are pages 2 and 3 of this document.

Essay Topic

At times, an elected or government-appointed official may encounter a conflict between his or her job requirements and a personal religious belief. For example, a county clerk may not want to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples because of his or her religious view of marriage. Similarly, a clerk who is a pacifist may object to issuing a gun license based on his or her religious belief.

Should an elected official be able to opt out of certain job duties? How far should government go to accommodate elected or appointed government officials who have religious objections to certain job requirements?

Write an essay in which you discuss both the rights and responsibilities of the official and of the individual(s) applying for the license. In what way does your solution affect all parties involved?

Eligibility

The contest is open to all high school students in the graduating classes of 2016 and 2017. There are no requirements regarding GPA, faith, after-school activities or clubs.

Prizes

First Place – \$2,000 & a trip for two to Washington, D.C.*

Second Place – \$1,000

Third Place – \$250

Length

800 (minimum) to 1,200 (maximum) words

Note: the word count does not include title and bibliography

Submission & Due Date

The essay, student registration form and essay adviser form all must be mailed together to the following address and **postmarked no later than March 4, 2016**. No email or fax entries will be accepted:

Baptist Joint Committee Essay Contest
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Requirements

1. Submitted essays should be in 12-point type, double-spaced and single-sided. To ensure fairness, your name (or any other identifying

information) should **not** appear on **any page** of the essay.

2. Essays must have a title at the top of the first page of the essay (do not use a title page).

3. Essays must be between 800-1,200 words, not counting the title and bibliography. Please do not fold or staple your essay; you may use a paper clip.

4. Sources must be used, cited and credited in a bibliography, consistent with an accepted citation style. Wikipedia may not be used as a source.

5. Each essay must be accompanied by an essay adviser form, signed to verify the essay is the student's original work.

Essays failing to meet the requirements will not be judged.

Winners will be announced by the end of summer 2016. The first-place winner will be recognized at the BJC board meeting in Washington, D.C., in October 2016. All entrants will hear from the Baptist Joint Committee by email or U.S. mail after the winners are selected.

Essay Adviser Information

Students must have an "essay adviser" who verifies, to the best of his or her knowledge, that the essay is the student's original work and may review the essay to ensure it meets all requirements. Advisers must be a teacher or counselor at the applicant's school or on staff at the applicant's house of worship. The adviser cannot be the student's parent unless the parent home-schools the student. An adviser form must be mailed with the essay entry. An adviser may work with more than one student, but each essay must be submitted with its own adviser form.

Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged on the depth of their content, the mastery of the topic and the skill with which they are written. Students should develop a point of view on the issue and demonstrate critical thinking, using appropriate examples, arguments and other evidence to support their position. Essays should be free of grammatical errors and should be clear, concise and well-organized. Judges reserve the right to reduce the number of awards.

Visit www.BJConline.org/contest for more information or contact Charles Watson Jr. by email at cwatson@BJConline.org.

Note: All essays become property of the BJC and cannot be returned.

*Trip includes actual airfare costs to D.C. up to a predetermined amount and one night of lodging for the contest winner and one accompanying parent/guardian to present the winning essay at the BJC board meeting.



2016 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest Student Registration Form

Entries must be postmarked by March 4, 2016

Include this form and the essay adviser form with your essay

Student Information

Name _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Telephone (include area code) _____

Email (please print clearly) _____

NOTE: You will receive an email after the winners are selected. If no email address is provided, you will receive a letter in the mail.

School _____

Graduation year _____

Where did you learn about this scholarship contest? (Circle one)

FastWeb.com Scholarships.com Baptist Joint Committee Church School/Teacher Friend

Other: _____

Essay Information

Title of essay _____

Exact word count of essay text (must be between 800-1,200) _____

Essay Adviser Information

Adviser's name _____

Adviser's email _____

Adviser's phone number _____

NOTE: You must have an essay adviser. He or she should fill out the "Essay Adviser Form," and it must be included with your entry.

Mail your entry to:

Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty • 200 Maryland Ave., N.E. • Washington, D.C. 20002

**2016 Religious Liberty
Essay Scholarship Contest
Essay Adviser Form**

**Must be included with student's entry
Entries must be postmarked by March 4, 2016**



The essay adviser verifies that, to the best of his or her knowledge, the essay is the student's original work and may review it to ensure it meets all requirements. Advisers must be a teacher or counselor at the student's school or on staff at the student's house of worship. The adviser cannot be the student's parent unless the parent home-schools the student.

In the essay, the student must discuss whether elected officials should be able to opt out of certain job duties and address how far the government should go to accommodate elected or appointed government officials who have religious objections to certain job requirements. Visit **BJCOnline.org/contest** for the complete topic.

Essay Adviser Information

NOTE: you may be the essay adviser for more than one student, but you must include a copy of this form with each essay.

Your name _____

Name of school or house of worship _____

Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Daytime telephone _____ Email _____

Student's name _____

How do you know the student? _____

Sign below to verify, to the best of your knowledge, that the essay is the original composition of the student.

Would you like to receive the topic for the 2016 contest via email? (Circle one): YES NO

Do you have suggestions for future contests?

200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

202-544-4226



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