

# 2020 STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST



## TOPIC

Religious freedom should be a shield that protects the rights of everyone to practice any faith or no faith at all, without harming others. But some politicians' regressive agenda seeks to misuse religious freedom to justify discrimination against LGBTQ people, women, religious minorities and the nonreligious. Recent ways we've seen it misused include:

- Legislative efforts to turn the U.S. into an officially "Christian nation" and roll back positive social change by misusing religious freedom to discriminate.
- Policies that allow health care workers to deny care to patients based on religious or moral objections, and allow employers and universities to use religion to deny employees and students access to birth control.
- Legislative efforts to divert public money away from public schools to fund religious education through private school voucher schemes.

**Why is the separation of religion and government important to you?** (Your essay can, but doesn't have to, include one of the issues mentioned above.)

**What have you or others in your community done to oppose threats to religious freedom?**

**What more can be done?**

## DEADLINE

**April 19, 2020**

## PRIZES

**1st Place:**

**\$1,500** and essay will be printed on AU's website and in Church & State magazine

**2nd Place:**

**\$1,000** and essay will be printed on AU's website

**3rd Place:**

**\$500** and essay will be printed on AU's website

## CRITERIA

- The contest is open to high school juniors and seniors in the United States including the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.
- The essay length should be between 750 and 1,000 words.
- Essays should be well-written, well-researched and should be the student's original writing, supported by specific examples and/or properly cited sources where appropriate. Essays can reference current events, U.S. history, primary sources, personal experiences and information from AU.org.
- Essays must be submitted no later than 11:59PM on Sunday, April 19.
- Employees and board members of Americans United, and members of their families, are not eligible to participate.

**You can find more information and submit your essay online at:**



[www.au.org/essaycontest](http://www.au.org/essaycontest)

