

Superior Court of California  
County of Santa Clara



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## Law Day 2018: Eighth Grade Essay Competition

*Santa Clara County students answer the Superior Court's call  
for essays in conjunction with Law Day 2018*

SAN JOSÉ, California (Thursday, May 24, 2018): In partnership with the Santa Clara Bar Association and The Santa Clara County Office of Education, the Superior Court held a competition for eighth grade students in Santa Clara County that asked "What Role Should Public Opinion Have on the Three Branches of Government?" This year's essay question was derived from the National Law Day theme "Separation of Powers; Framework for Freedom."

Law Day, held annually on May 1, is a national day set aside to celebrate the rule of law which underscores how law and the legal process contribute to the freedoms that all Americans share. Law Day also provides an opportunity to recognize the role of courts in democracy and the importance of jury service to maintaining the integrity of the courts.

Hon. Julia Alloggiamento, Chair of the Court's Community Outreach Committee, stated "The issues relating to separation of powers and the role of public opinion are important and timely. The Law Day Essay Contest provided a great opportunity to hear from our youth about these topics and begin a dialogue with them as our future voters and leaders".

Numerous submissions were received from schools across the County, with the top three essays coming from San Jose's Luther Burbank Middle School. The Superior Court greatly appreciates the efforts of all the students who submitted essays and while it was difficult to determine a winner one essay really stood out amongst all others. The Superior Court congratulates the winners for their inspiring and thoughtful commentary on how our words and actions can make a difference. The first, second, and third place finishers in this year's competition will all be recognized at an upcoming Santa Clara County Office of Education Board meeting.

Winning Submission:

### The Nation's Solution

Should we expect this nation to get better by itself or allow us, the people, to help guide it in the right direction? This government is flawed, no doubt about it, but you can either choose to deal with its imperfections or help cover its holes. Public opinion does matter, and it should very much play a role in this government. Not only does the public deserve to be heard in order to improve this country but whatever the government decides, affects us deeply. 100 years ago, this nation was even more corrupted but with the help of our people, we changed it for the better. Why stop now?

Rosa Parks didn't sit in the back of the bus and wait for someone else to stand up for her. She went to the front and sat down, though she did not verbally talk her actions stated her opinion clearly. This simple act was a small wave that would soon become part of the tsunami that gave blacks their rights. The government needs to hear our people's opinions and actually listen, our opinion like Rosa Parks' will help take this nation in the right direction. In addition to this, why wouldn't the public get a say in something that affects them more than the people making the decision?

In recent events, there has been a spark of fury between the citizens of this country and our president about gun rights. Countless of school shootings have taken place and our government hasn't helped in the least. This is a choice example of how public opinion matters. Students all over the country have started walkouts and protests to fix our gun laws and help protect more lives. The fact that students are more knowledgeable about protecting our people than this government is disappointing and ridiculous. Nevertheless, it's obvious that this nation will benefit listening to the people of this country. Who knows more about this country than the very people who live in it. We together can fill up the holes of flaws in this government with solutions if we are able to share our opinion. I strongly believe the public should be able to play a role in what is decided in this government. Especially if we want to make this country more expedient. Let's open the door to a better future, this government needs it.

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**SANTA CLARA SUPERIOR COURT**  
Co-Sponsored by the Santa Clara County Bar Association

## 8TH GRADE ESSAY AND POETRY CONTEST 2018

### What Role Should Public Opinion Have On The Three Branches Of Government?

**Online Form Submission:**

<https://www.jotform.com/scscourt/lawday2018>

The 2018 theme highlights the ways in which the separation of powers (in executive, legislative and judicial branches) provides checks and balances between the branches and explores how society and public opinion may or may not impact each of those independent branches.

This written exercise is designed to be an open-ended question that reflect each student's opinion, beliefs and/or personal story. Essay and Poem categories will be judged separately.

Prizes awarded to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place writings in each category.  
 1st Place prize in each category (essay and poetry) will receive Plantronics headphones.  
 2nd Place prize \$25 gift card  
 3rd Place prize \$15 gift card

**In 250 words or less (either by Essay or Poem). Submissions are due by Tuesday, May 1, 2018**