League of Women Voters of Coos County

Civil Discourse Essay Contest

Who: Coos County and Reedsport middle school, high school, and college students
Date Due: Monday, April 15, 2019
Prizes: $100 first place, $75 second place, $50 third place

THE PROBLEM
"Civil" means "courteous and polite." "Civil" also means "pertaining to activities in the public sphere." "Civil discourse" is the practice of discussing topics in public forums without descending to abusive communication. Whether around the campfire, at the school board meeting, in the pages of a newspaper, or in a legislative chamber, groups making big decisions have always relied on an agreement to pursue civil discourse.

Hot words are nothing new in political campaigns, but the temperature of public gatherings and legislative deliberations has unquestionably risen in the past few years, especially after the 2016 elections. As our national ideological divides widen, how will we turn heat into light?

THE CHALLENGE
The League of Women Voters of Coos County invites Coos County and Reedsport middle school, high school students and college students to write a 250–300 word essay answering the question, "How can we promote civil discourse?" Please be specific. The second part of the challenge is to distill your main idea in a tweet with the hashtag #civildiscourse. Visit http://tinyurl.com/lwvessay for some ideas about civil discourse to get you started.

THE RULES
Submit your essay online at http://tinyurl.com/lwvessay by midnight on Monday, April 15, 2019.

Essays selected by our judges will earn cash prizes in two categories: 1.) middle and high school students and 2.) college students. The winning authors will read their essay and tweet at a presentation on Sunday, May 5, 2019.

All entries become the property of the League of Women Voters of Coos County (LWVCC) and LWVCC reserves the right to use any and all information related to the contest, including submissions provided by participants.

For more information on the League of Women Voters of Coos County, please visit our website at www.lwvcooscounty.org or phone Sue at 541-297-8305. Like us on Facebook!