

# 2024 FOURTH CIRCUIT BILL OF RIGHTS DAY Student Video & Art Contest

## First Amendment Right To Assemble Peaceably



### Picketing Is Upheld

## High Court Has Reinforced Precious Right of Petition

In upsetting a South Carolina conviction of 187 Negroes who picketed the state house grounds, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed the constitutional right of petition and reinforced one of the precious safeguards of our system.

Two years ago these students paraded with placards, protesting segregation and other discriminations they believed had been directed at them because of their race. They said their protest was directed at the legislature and the public.

AFTER 45 minutes, they were arrested for breach of peace because the city manager of Columbia feared trouble was imminent, a crowd of several hundred on-lookers having assembled. Nothing happened to suggest this, but the city manager thought he recog-

nized "possible trouble makers" among the spectators.

The court did not question the good faith of the nervous city manager, but it held that the arrest and conviction of these students did infringe on their right to petition for redress of grievances.

Picketing, as a means of expressing a grievance—real or fancied—may be foolish, or useless. The views expressed may be unpopular. There even may be public annoyance; unrest may be created.

**BUT** the alternative, as Justice Stewart said in the opinion, is "standardization of ideas either by legislatures, courts, or dominant political or community groups." Under our Constitution, there is no room for any of this.

Stomp on one group for exercising this privilege, and shortly no group will have the privilege. Then other constitutional privileges will quickly disappear.

Evansville Press, February 27, 1963

Reverend James Edwards at the unveiling of the Edwards v. SC historical marker in 2021 | Benedict College

In *Edwards v. South Carolina*, the Supreme Court held in 1963 that the Constitution "does not permit a State to make criminal the peaceful expression of unpopular views." How would you address this statement through video or art?

The Bill of Rights Day Video & Art Contest is open to all students currently in grades 6 through 12 from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Full contest prompt, rules, judging criteria, and entry instructions available at: [www.ca4.uscourts.gov/art-contest](http://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/art-contest)

Deadline for entries is Friday, November 1, 2024. Presented by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, *Courts4Civics* initiative.



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## PROMPT

In 1961, 187 Black students walked to the South Carolina State House to protest racial discrimination. Hundreds of onlookers gathered as the students “peaceably expressed their grievances” and “sang patriotic and religious songs.” Although the protestors were not violent and did not threaten violence, the police ordered them to disperse and arrested the students for breaching the peace. The Supreme Court reversed the students’ convictions, explaining that the Constitution “does not permit a State to make criminal the peaceful expression of unpopular views.” *Edwards v. South Carolina*, 372 U.S. 229, 237 (1963).

Consider one or more of these questions in preparing your submission:

- How is the First Amendment right to assemble peaceably relevant today?
- How does the First Amendment right to assemble peaceably empower individuals and further our democratic principles?
- How has the First Amendment right to assemble peaceably contributed to social and political movements?
- What are the limits on the right to assemble in the United States?

## QUESTIONS

Contact [civics@ca4.uscourts.gov](mailto:civics@ca4.uscourts.gov) or call 703-518-8180



Student segregation protest on the grounds of the SC State House, March 2, 1961 Copyright University of South Carolina MIRC

## WHO MAY ENTER

Students in grades 6 through 12 from Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Students may submit one entry only as an individual or as part of a group of up to five students in the same category (grades 6–8 or grades 9–12). NOTE: Prior winners of any Fourth Circuit–sponsored contest as well as children, grandchildren, stepchildren, and members of the household of a federal judge or federal judiciary employee may not participate in the competition.

## PRIZE AMOUNTS

	Grades 6–8	Grades 9–12
First place:	\$250	\$1,000
Second place:	\$175	\$750
Third place:	\$100	\$500

## SUBMISSION DETAILS

- One submission per participant/group. Original video (30 seconds to two minutes long), song, poem, or work of visual art (two-dimensional and three-dimensional works of fine, graphic, and applied art). Entries must be submitted as a document, file, or photo (no links).
- Submissions must include:
  - **Artist’s statement:** 100-words (grades 6–8) or 200-words (grades 9–12) addressing the prompt.
  - **Process statement:** (no minimum word count) explaining the process for creating the content, including a list of any programs used or source material referenced.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Your entry form and art/video file must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, November 1, 2024. Go to [www.ca4.uscourts.gov/art-contest](http://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/art-contest) to complete the entry form and submit your art/video.



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