



ATTORNEY GENERAL GEORGE JEPSEN

RIDGEFIELD YOUTH WINS LAW DAY ESSAY CONTEST

For immediate release

MONDAY MAY 2, 2011

HARTFORD -- Attorney General George Jepsen today congratulated William Baughman, 14, of Scotts Ridge Middle School in Ridgefield, for taking first place in the 18th annual Law Day essay contest sponsored by the Office of the Attorney General.

“Should students be suspended or expelled for comments or threats they make towards a teacher or school on Facebook?” was the topic that drew 546 entries from 8th grade students from around the state. A panel of 14 judges selected the top five essays and recognized five more with an honorable mention.

William Baughman concluded that students should be expelled. “When we evaluate the First Amendment, we must make the assumption that the freedom of speech was meant to preserve our rights to voice opinions, feelings and emotions and not to be corrupted into a shield to hide behind for those making threats and proposing violence,” he wrote.

Jepsen will present a certificate to the winner in a May 19 assembly at his school.

“I commend all the students who participated in this year’s contest. Excellent essays were contributed and our judges spent many hours reading the entries and evaluating the students’ arguments before making their choices,” Jepsen said. Jepsen also praised the students’ teachers who encouraged their students and worked with them to participate.

Other winning essays were: second, Nick Fiore of Cloonan Middle School, Stamford; third, Rebecca Goldman, Kingswood Oxford, West Hartford; fourth, Lauren Freedman, Cheshire Academy; and fifth, Shawn Murdzek, East Hartford Middle School.

Students recognized with an honorable mention were: Jahmique Caines, East Hartford Middle School; Angelina Opoku, HALS Academy, New Britain; Brad Langhoff, East Granby Middle School; Rachel Gosselin, Westbrook Middle School and Amanda Cabral, Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School, Coventry.

The judges were: Michael L. Anderson, attorney, Anderson Law Firm, P.C.; Joseph Andreana, executive director, Connecticut Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, Inc.; Phyllis Carella; Nicholas D. Caruso, senior staff associate for field service, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education; Bette Daraskevich; Eileen P. Driscoll; Cindy Dubuque, director of constituent services, Office of the Attorney General; Sharry L. Goldman; Tom Hennick, public education officer, Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission; Archie Leslie; Michael A. Martone, executive policy advisor and counsel, Office of the Attorney General; Susan Tukey, former teacher/banker; John C. Turner, Jr., attorney, Maher & Murtha, LLC and Betsy Wright.

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