



“Gerrymander Standard” Writing Competition Submission Requirements

Overview/Theme: Common Cause welcomes all papers that will identify partisan gerrymanders and distinguish them from districts drawn using neutral redistricting principles while developing legal theories or arguments that could be used by courts to declare partisan gerrymanders unconstitutional. This year, we are asking authors to focus specifically on the First Amendment issue in *Shapiro v. McManus* and *Whitford v. Nichol* to demonstrate why the drawing of Maryland’s congressional districts or Wisconsin’s Assembly districts is a partisan gerrymander that should be condemned under the First Amendment. Practitioners, scholars, and students from a wide variety of academic disciplines are encouraged to submit papers. The judging committee will include leading academics in the democracy field. Authors of the top three papers will receive a cash prize and an offer of publication in an academic journal. The deadline is Sunday, March 27, 2016.

Submission Requirements:

- **Deadline:** Submissions must be emailed to contest@commoncause.org by Sunday, May 1, 2016. Papers sent after this date will not be considered.
- **Eligibility:** Any individual may submit a paper. Submissions are *not* restricted by student status or academic discipline.
- **Content:** Papers will be judged on their ability to distinguish districts using neutral redistricting principles from partisan gerrymanders and the persuasiveness of their legal theories or arguments that could be used by courts to declare partisan gerrymanders in *Shapiro* or *Whitford* unconstitutional under the First Amendment. Please do not put your name or other identifying information anywhere in your paper. List your name, phone number, and address only in the body of your cover email.
- **Format:** Submissions must be original unpublished academic works. The paper must be 50 pages or less in length, including footnotes and endnotes. The text of the paper must be in double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. Footnotes and endnotes may be in single-spaced 10-point font.

- *Judging Process:* All submissions will go through an initial screening process among Common Cause legal staff. The finalists from that process will then be reviewed by a panel of judges made up of democracy experts. This panel will select the top three papers among the finalists. Submissions will be judged on their depth of legal analysis, quality of writing, readiness for publication, originality, thoroughness of research, relevance to the topic, and discussion of conclusions and future impact. The winners will be announced in May 2016.
- *Award:* The author(s) of the top submission will receive \$5,000, 2nd place will receive \$3,000, and 3rd place will receive \$2,000. If more than one author submits a winning paper, prize money will be divided between them. All will be eligible for publication in Election Law Journal. Common Cause will cover travel expenses for up to two authors per paper to travel to a national redistricting reform symposium to present their papers.
- *Entry Fee:* There is no entry fee.
- *Previous Publication/Use:* No paper previously published will be considered. However, papers currently being considered for publication, papers related to research done by the author(s) and/or submitted to fulfill a course requirement or law journal credit requirements may be submitted. Submissions should not yet have undergone significant editing by journal editors or others. If a paper is currently being considered for publication, the author(s) should consult the editors of the alternative journal to make sure that entry in this competition will not interfere with his/her opportunity for publication in that journal.
- *Additional Questions:* Check www.commoncause.org/gerrymanderstandard for updates or email contest@commoncause.org with questions.