

11th Annual Public Policy Essay Contest (2009-2010) for Anabaptist Youth Sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office

Guidelines

Purpose

- To promote church-wide awareness of significant public policy issues by highlighting Mennonite and Brethren in Christ (BIC) youth perspectives
- To promote youth understanding of the relationship of faith to public policy
- To promote greater awareness of the work of MCC's Washington Office and expand the base of Anabaptist policy advocates

Guidelines

- Contest is open to all Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and other Anabaptist youth of high school age, and to all youth who attend Mennonite high schools.
- Immediate family members of current MCC staff or board members are not eligible for the contest.
- Essays should be 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-in. margins.
- Each student may submit only one essay. It is preferred that essays be submitted electronically (as an attachment to an email), but hard-copy submissions are also accepted. On a separate cover sheet, please list: student's name, mailing address, email address, home congregation, school name, current grade, name of school paper and local paper with editor's name and email (this information is often available online). MCC will send a press release to the local paper indicated for the winning essays.
- Essays will be judged anonymously.
- Resources are available from the MCC Washington Office (920 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003; email: mccwash@mcc.org); and on our web site at washington.mcc.org.
- Essays must be e-mailed or postmarked by December 18, 2009 and submitted to your regional MCC office (see map below).
- Prizes will be awarded as follows: Grand prize will be a trip to Washington, DC, including a visit to the winner's congressional office. Three regional honorable mention prizes will also be awarded.
- The MCC Washington Office will announce winners by February 19, 2010.
- Entries will be judged on *content* (demonstrated understanding of the issues), *clarity* (writing style) and *creativity* (imaginative and thoughtful policy positions).
- Excerpts from the winning essays will be published in the *Washington Memo* and online. All entrants will receive a 1-year free trial subscription to the *Washington Memo*.

Entries must be e-mailed or postmarked by December 18, 2009 and submitted to your regional MCC office:

MCC Central States 121 East 30 th Street P.O. Box 235 N. Newton, KS 67117 kkw@mcc.org	MCC East Coast 900 E. Howell St. Philadelphia, PA 19149 eastcoast@mcc.org	MCC Great Lakes 1013 Division Street Goshen, IN 46528 GreatLakesOffice@mcc.org	West Coast MCC 1010 G Street Reedley, CA 93654 westcoast@mcc.org
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Students should select from one of the following topics:

International Debt Relief

Proclaim Jubilee: A New Beginning

Many of the world's poorest countries continue to suffer from unjust and illegitimate debt owed to foreign governments or international financial institutions. These countries continue to pay millions in illegitimate debt payments when this money could be better used for healthcare, infrastructure, food and clean water.

As the world continues to face the worst financial crisis in years, debt relief for poor countries can help create a new beginning. Scripture mandates a year of jubilee and renewal, which includes cancellation of debts.

The essay should answer the following questions:

1. Give a brief history of the debt crisis.
2. How have poor countries been affected by this ongoing crisis?
3. What actions have governments and financial institutions taken so far? And what more needs to be done?
4. What is the legislation before Congress that relates to debt? And how will this help?
5. What does the Bible have to say about debt cancellation?

U.S. Housing

Secure Dwelling Places: A Home for Everyone

The United States is in the midst of a housing crisis, with more than one million families losing their home to foreclosure in 2008. The invisible backdrop to the crisis, however, is the millions of Americans who have long struggled to find affordable housing.

The essay should answer the following questions:

1. How affordable is housing in the student's home community? How does this compare to housing nationwide?
2. In what ways do government policies benefit homeowners, who are generally middle- and upper-class? What government programs are available for low-income residents?
3. From your perspective as a Christian, does the government provide enough in each of these categories? Too little? Too much? How would you change government policies to provide more "secure dwelling places" for all?
4. What is our role as Christians and as a church in ensuring that everyone has a safe and decent place to call home?