

Department of Arkansas American Legion
Department Convention
Held on June 18-22, 2025

Resolution

Page 1 of 2

No.:

Title: American Legion Department of Arkansas Adjutant Position

Origin: Criswell-Robinson Post 71

WHEREAS, the current Department Constitution, Article VI, Department Officers, Section 5 requires that the Department Adjutant shall hold the office until either removed for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Department Executive Committee or resigns,

WHEREAS, the Department Constitution does not establish that a Adjutant be required to work under a contract or that a contract have a renewal clause,

WHEREAS, management employees in key positions should have contracts to clearly outline job duties, compensation, benefits, and termination procedures, providing legal protection and reducing potential misunderstandings or disputes,

WHEREAS, an employment contract protects the employee's job security, income, leave entitlements, and other basic rights and protects the employers from certain risks, such as breaches of confidentiality or underperforming employees,

WHEREAS, the Department Constitution does not address the issue of who supervisors the Adjutant or accomplishes an annual job performance report for the Department Executive Committee, and

WHEREAS, employees under contract should have their performance evaluated, and this evaluation is crucial for ensuring continual satisfactory and successful performance and maintaining a productive relationship between the Department executive management and the Adjutant,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, at The American Legion Department of Arkansas Department Convention in North Little Rock, AR, June 22, 2025, the following change to Department of Arkansas Constitution Article VI – Duties of Officers, Section 5 be made as follows,

Section 5. The Department Executive Committee at its first meeting following the adoption of this Section shall elect a Department Adjutant upon the recommendation of the Department Commander. The elected Adjutant will be under the direct supervision of the Department Commander. Such Department Adjutant shall be required to sign an annual contract. The content and presentation of the contract shall be under the control of the Department Executive Committee, be approved by a two-thirds vote of the committee and presented to the Adjutant by the Department Commander. The Adjutant shall be evaluated annually to the Adjutant's job description in the Personnel Manual. The annual evaluation shall be performed separately by the current Commander, Membership Chairman, Policy Committee Chairman and the Finance Officer. Results of the evaluation shall be tabulated or summarized by the Commander for the Executive Committee at the next scheduled meeting. Failure of an Adjutant to fulfill the job description may at the Executive Committee discretion and a majority vote be cause for not renewing the contract. An Adjutant who does not have a contract renewed shall have the right to appeal the decision before the Department Executive Committee who shall approve or deny the appeal with a majority vote. Between conventions the Adjutant shall hold office until removed for cause by a majority

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Page 2 of 2

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vote of the Department Executive Committee. Any vacancy occurring in the office of Department Adjutant shall be filled by posting the vacancy and a review of the applications by a committee made up of the Department Commander, National Executive Committee Person, Chairman of the Policy and Procedures Committee and First Past Commander. Said Committee will make a recommendation to the DEC and the DEC will hire an adjutant by a majority vote of the DEC. The Department Adjutant shall give adequate bond, which shall be approved by the Department Executive Committee.

This is to certify that this resolution was adopted by our Post but with Department action substituted for local resolving clause.

Charles W. East

Post 71 Commander

Post 71 Adjutant

Charles W. East

BELOW THIS LINE FOR DEPARTMENT RESOLUTION COMMITTEE USE ONLY

Approved

Approved with Amendment

Rejected

Received and Recorded

Consolidated with

Referred to Standing Commission or Committee on

Other Action

Signature of Chairman or Secretary

The American Legion Department of Arkansas

Department Executive Committee

Held on

June 19-22, 2025

Resolution

Title: Oratorical Speech Contest Modification

SUBMITTED TO: Americanism Committee

SUBMITTED: By Department of Arkansas

WHEREAS, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to service for the community, state and nation and,

WHEREAS, The American Legion fulfills its dedication to the community, state and nation through its programs based on "The Four Pillars" and,

WHEREAS, One of The Four Pillars of the American Legion is Americanism and,

WHEREAS, The Americanism Pillar has an Oratorical Contest also known as A Constitutional Speech Contest and,

WHEREAS, The contest was developed for high school students primarily to instill a better knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States of America and,

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes the children and youth of the United States of America would be better prepared for acceptance of the duties, rights and privileges of American citizenship by learning about the Constitution of the United States of America through the Constitutional Speech Contest and,

WHEREAS, The requirements of the speech contest includes a memorized eight(8) to ten(10) minute prepared speech based on the constitution of the United States of America and four assigned three(3) to five(5) minute speeches based on amendments to the Constitution resulting in the research and memorization of five speeches and,

WHEREAS, The number of students participating in the Constitutional Speech Contest has decreased dramatically over the years and continues to decrease nationwide; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion August 28,2025, That the American Legion Constitutional Speech Contest requirements be amended to delete the four assigned three(3) to five(5) minute speeches and retain the eight(8) to ten(10) minute prepared speech

This is to certify that the resolution above was adopted by the Department of Arkansas convention on June 22, 2025 in North Little Rock, Arkansas

Attested by:

Robert Renner, Adjutant

Supporting Document for Modification of Constitutional Speech Contest

Submitted by Department of Arkansas, 2025

Experts say, “Teaching government, civics and history is becoming a more pressing need than ever before. With school cutbacks, the internet distracting students, and the disappearance of traditional newspapers and TV news shows that objectively report information, youngsters have become increasingly disengaged from civic and political life”

Retired Justice Sandra Day O’Connor says, “Because an understanding and appreciation for democracy is **not** an inherited trait that is passed along in the gene pool, it has to be taught anew to each generation”

Furthermore, American Bar Association (ABA) president Stephen Zack says, “Our country’s future is now being threatened by a basic lack of understanding among Americans about what a democracy is and how it’s supposed to work”. He also says, “The sad fact is this is a pervasive problem that starts in schools and permeates our entire society.” “We all need to do our part to ensure the words of the Constitution are not just words,’ Zack says.

Students can develop an understanding and appreciation for democracy by becoming familiar with the Constitution.

American Legion’s High School “Constitutional Speech Contest” also known as “Oratorical Contest,” is an activity for high school students, which was designed to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States of America. Other objectives are leadership, the ability to think clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

The American Legion has been involved in helping generations of high school students become familiar with the Constitution of the United States of America through its Constitutional Speech Contest.

However, since 1934 when the Oratorical Contest was introduced, extra-curricular activities have become an important factor in the admission process to institutions of higher learning. These activities such as; Arts, Clubs, Media, Military (ROTC), Church Activities, Community Activities, Sports and Volunteer Work & Community Service and a report from A National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health revealed that 70% of adolescents are involved in some form of extracurricular activities. Participating in these activities is very time consuming.

As previously stated, the importance for students to learn about government, and the constitution is vitally important and we all need to do our part. The American Legion Constitutional Speech Contest is an excellent way for students to learn about the constitution. However, due to the amount of time devoted to extra-curricular activities, students are apparently unable or unwilling to devote the extensive period of time needed to research and prepare for five memorized speeches currently required by the Constitutional Speech Contest.

Unfortunately there has been a decline in the number of students who are participating in the Constitutional Speech Contest. Since there is no requirement for posts to submit reports to their Departments or National Headquarters, the exact number of students who are participating in, or who have participated in the contest in past years, is unknown. However, by contacting Department Adjutants, Constitutional Speech Contest Chairpersons, Commanders, and National Executive Committeemen, without fail, the responses indicate that the number of students participating in the contest continues to decrease year after year.

To fulfill the obligation to promote Americanism, the American Legion needs to increase the number of students who become exposed to the Constitution of the United States by doing whatever is necessary to attract students to participate in the Constitutional Speech Contest.

One way to increase the number of contestants in the Constitutional Speech Contest is to limit the requirements to one primary memorized speech based on the constitution instead of necessitating research and memorization of four additional

amendment speeches. The Resolution to modify the contest requirements would do just that.

REFERENCES

Thomas D. Snyder, editor. National Center for Educational Statistics. US Department of Education Research and Improvement. , January 1993

Article “Flunking Civics: Why America’s Kids Know So Little “ ABA Journal. American Bar Association. Copyright 2017