

**THE 16th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF MONROE COUNTY
2026 LAW DAY ESSAY CONTEST
RULES AND REGULATIONS
Grades: 6th – 12th**

LAW DAY 2026: The Rule of Law and The American Dream

Essay prompt:

The American Dream depends on a stable legal system that applies to everyone. Choose one constitutional amendment and discuss how it protects the rule of law and helps people adhere to The American Dream.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

Entries in the law day essay will be grouped in two divisions:
Division I 6th - 8th grade / Division II 9th - 12th grade

AWARDS TO BE GIVEN:

1st place: \$100.00 Gift Card
2nd place: \$ 75.00 Gift Card
3rd place: \$ 50.00 Gift Card

Winning essays will be posted on the 16th Judicial Circuit Website. www.Keyscourts.net and may be published in the Local Newspapers.

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES:

1. Essays must be **500** words or less, typed, and double spaced or neatly handwritten. The title, citations, footnotes, and bibliography will be excluded from the 500-word limit.
2. Each student may submit only one (1) entry.
3. Each entry must include a cover sheet indicating the student's name, school, grade, telephone number, and email, as well as the teacher's name, telephone number, and email.
4. **Deadline for entries is Friday, April 3, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.** Please submit all submissions by email to nicolas.concepcion@keyscurts.net. If you prefer, submissions can be delivered in-person to:
 - o Lower Keys submissions - Freeman Justice Center, 302 Fleming Street, Key West, Florida 33040, Attention: Nicolas Concepcion
 - o Middle Keys submissions - Marathon Courthouse, 3117 Overseas Highway, Marathon, Florida 33050, Attention: Kim Kiraly
 - o Upper Keys submissions to the Plantation Key Courthouse, 88770 Overseas Highway Suite 1, Tavernier, Florida 33070, Attention: Cindy Shepard-Wike.
5. A committee of Lawyers & Court Personnel will select the first, second and third place winners. Essays will be judged on format, clarity, style, reasoning, creativity and overall effort.
6. Submitted entries cannot be returned. The 16th Judicial Circuit retains the right to reproduce any essays submitted, whole or in part.
7. Winners will be announced on April 17, 2026.
8. Questions regarding the rules of the contest or submission of entries can be directed to Cheryl Alfonso at (305) 295-3652 or Nicolas Concepcion at (305) 295-3582.

Essays will be checked for AI usage and plagiarism. Please refrain from utilizing AI outside of research purposes

ESSAY CONTEST PRIZES PROVIDED BY:

The Monroe County Bar Association

2026 Law Day Essay Cover Page
The form must be attached securely to the Essay
Please Print

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

School Name: _____

Student Phone Number: _____

Teacher's Phone Number: _____

Teacher's Email:

Student's Email:

Essays be displayed in the hallways of the Monroe County Courthouses.

Prize winners will have their essay featured on the 16th Judicial Circuit Website
KeysCourts.net.

** The 16th Judicial Circuit will pick up entries from schools upon request by calling Cheryl Alfonso at (305) 295-3652 for Lower Keys submissions or Cindy Shepard-Wike at (305) 853-7356 for Middle – Upper Keys submissions.

For further questions on the Law Day Contest, please contact Cheryl Alfonso, Court Operations Manager for the 16th Judicial Circuit at (305) 295-3652 or Nicolas Concepcion at (305) 295-3582.