



**United States District Court**  
District of Arizona  
Sandra Day O'Connor U.S. Courthouse  
401 W. Washington Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

# **Federal Courts Sponsor Civics Contest**

PHOENIX – A civics contest organized by federal courts in the western United States offers Arizona high school students a chance to win cash prizes while learning about their constitutional rights.

“50 Years After the Miranda Decision: How Federal Courts Defined the Rights of the Accused” is an essay and video competition open to sophomores, juniors and seniors in public, private and parochial schools or to home-schooled students of equivalent status. Individual students can compete in the essay contest, while individuals and teams of up to three students can enter the video contest. Students must submit entries by April 15, 2016. Complete contest information is available at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

In Arizona, the contest is sponsored by the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona and the Courts and Community Committee of the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit, governing body for federal courts in the western states. The District of Arizona will conduct preliminary judging of the entries from Arizona students and will award prizes of \$500, \$300, and \$200 to the first-, second-, and third-place winners in both the writing and video competition. These finalists will advance to final judging at the Ninth Circuit to compete for additional prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 and \$500 for the first-, second- and third-place winners in both categories of the contest. The winners of the local Arizona contest will be announced in May, and the winners at the Circuit level will be announced in June.

The contest celebrates the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Miranda v. Arizona in which the Court ruled that someone taken into police custody must be informed – prior to questioning – of their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Students are asked to consider how “Miranda Rights” came to be defined, how they are safeguarded by the federal courts, and why they are so important to our system of justice.

“Civics education is key to understanding the Constitution,” said U.S. Magistrate Judge Bridget Bade of Phoenix, who serves on the Courts and Community Committee. “We hope that the contest will inspire students to learn more about the law and our system of democracy.”

For more information about the contest, please contact Ellen Weber at (602) 322-7680 or [Ellen\\_Weber@azd.uscourts.gov](mailto:Ellen_Weber@azd.uscourts.gov).