



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Powell Students Win Prizes in C-SPAN's National Documentary Competition

Students explore the American story through the Declaration of Independence

Awarding \$100,000 in Cash Prizes to students and teachers



Ben Kurian will receive \$3,000 for the first-prize documentary, "A Right to Health."

WASHINGTON (March 11, 2026) — As the nation commemorates its historic 250th anniversary, C-SPAN today announced that students at Olentangy Liberty High School in Powell, Ohio have earned national recognition as 2026 winners in C-SPAN's annual StudentCam documentary competition.

Ben Kurian is a first-prize winner and will receive \$3,000 for the documentary, "[A Right to Health](#)." This video was also recognized as "Fan Favorite" receiving over 1,700 of more than 14,000 votes that were cast by the public between March 1 and March 8. Kurian will receive an additional \$500 in prize money. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 20 throughout the day. C-SPAN also recognizes Tyson Porter who served as an adviser and mentor throughout the StudentCam competition, helping guide this nationally recognized achievement.

Chase Petersen is a second-prize winner and will receive \$1,500 for the documentary, "[Against the Silence](#)," about the Vietnam War. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 16 throughout the day.

In recognition of the United States' Semiquincentennial, C-SPAN — in cooperation with its cable and satellite television partners — challenged middle and high school students across the country to examine the enduring power and relevance of the Declaration of Independence by exploring:

(1) its influence on a key moment from America's 250-year history

— or —

(2) how the values stated in the foundational document touch on a contemporary issue impacting them or their communities.

Through this project-based learning experience, students engaged in in-depth research, critical analysis, and original storytelling to explore matters of both personal and national importance. The response was extraordinary: C-SPAN received more than 1,800 documentary submissions from nearly 4,000 students representing 38 states and Washington, D.C., underscoring the competition's broad national reach and civic impact.

Among the most frequently addressed topics were:

- Themes of Equality (16%)
- Rights and Freedoms (13%)
- Immigration and Deportation (10%)
- Economy and Tariffs (9%)
- Health (8%)

By earning recognition in this highly competitive national program, these students join a distinguished group of civically engaged young filmmakers whose work contributes to a deeper public understanding of America's founding principles and their continued relevance today.

"As we recognize America's 250th anniversary, this year's StudentCam participants masterfully documented important political as well as societal issues and key moments from our nation's history through compelling videos that highlight the values and enduring legacy of the Declaration of Independence," said C-SPAN's Director of Education Relations Craig McAndrew. "Each of their prize-winning videos is sure to spark meaningful reflections among viewers across the country and inspire future generations of filmmakers. On behalf of everyone at C-SPAN, congratulations to the exceptionally gifted young people who triumphed in the 22nd annual competition!"

C-SPAN is funded by America's cable, satellite and streaming television companies as a commercial free public service. In Powell, C-SPAN is available through Spectrum, our local partner in StudentCam.

"Each year, C-SPAN's StudentCam competition demonstrates that the next generation is not only studying history – they're engaging with it and applying it to the world around them," said Adam Falk, Senior Vice President of State Government Affairs for Spectrum. "We commend the creativity of this year's winners, who examined the enduring power and relevance of the Declaration of Independence at a pivotal moment as our nation celebrates its 250th anniversary."

In addition to the grand-prize and first-prize winners, C-SPAN is awarding 16 second prizes, 32 third prizes and 97 honorable mention prizes. These winning videos will receive cash awards of \$1,500, \$750 and \$250, respectively. The StudentCam competition has awarded over \$1.7 million in prizes since 2004.

High school students competed on a regional level, with the United States divided into three regions: East, Central and West. Middle school students were judged on a national basis. The grand-prize winner was selected nationally among all regions and grade levels.

The 150 winning videos can be viewed at studentcam.org and may be used in a broadcast with attribution to C-SPAN. To schedule an interview with one or more of the winning students, please contact Pam McGorry at pmcgorry@c-span.org.

The annual StudentCam competition is funded by the C-SPAN Education Foundation. Videos were evaluated by a panel of educators and C-SPAN representatives based on the thoughtful examination of the competition's theme, quality of expression, inclusion of varying sides of the documentary's topic, and effective incorporation of C-SPAN programming.

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About C-SPAN Classroom:

C-SPAN Classroom uses the network's programs on public affairs, coverage of Congress, nonfiction books and American history to create free digital tools for teachers, students, and the public to use in classrooms, in projects or for research. C-SPAN Classroom's website provides social studies teachers with access to thousands of free resources, including short current events videos, Lesson Plans and Bell Ringers, plus Constitution Clips, Classroom Deliberations, and On This Day in History events. Engage with [C-SPAN Classroom](#) on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

About C-SPAN:

C-SPAN, the private nonprofit public affairs media organization providing Americans with unfiltered access to government proceedings, was created in 1979 as a public service by the cable television industry and is funded through fees paid by cable, satellite television and streaming companies that provide the C-SPAN Networks to subscribers, as well as donations from individual viewers and supporters. C-SPAN connects with millions of Americans through its three commercial-free TV networks, [C-SPAN Radio](#), [C-SPAN podcasts](#), the [C-SPAN Now app](#), a connected-TV streaming app [C-SPAN Select](#), [C-SPAN.org](#) and various social media platforms. The C-SPAN Networks' video-rich website contains nearly 305,000 hours of searchable and shareable content. Engage with C-SPAN on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Threads](#), and [YouTube](#), and stay connected through [weekly and daily newsletters](#).

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