



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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San Diego and Escondido 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



Helena de la Houssaye and Harper Haden will receive \$3,000 for the first-prize documentary, "This Is What Democracy Looks Like."

WASHINGTON (March 11, 2026) — As the nation commemorates its historic 250th anniversary, C-SPAN today announced that students in San Diego and Escondido, California have earned national recognition as 2026 winners in C-SPAN's annual StudentCam documentary competition.

Helena de la Houssaye and Harper Haden, students at Correia Middle School in San Diego, are first-prize winners and will receive \$3,000 for the documentary, "This Is What Democracy Looks Like," about the influence of the Declaration of Independence on the No Kings Movement. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 17 throughout the day. C-SPAN also recognizes Stacey Tinsley who served as an adviser and mentor throughout the StudentCam competition, helping guide this nationally recognized achievement.

Addison Powell, Ryan Anderson and Mniun Clark-Jijon, students at Community Montessori in Escondido, are second-prize winners and will receive \$1,500 for the documentary, "Behind Barbed Wire," about the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and happiness. This documentary will air on

C-SPAN's networks on April 1 throughout the day. C-SPAN also recognizes Gabrielle Lucido who served as an adviser and mentor throughout the StudentCam competition, helping guide this nationally recognized achievement.

The following students at Correia Middle School have won prizes:

- Celeste Stout is a third-prize winner and will receive \$750 for the documentary, "The Limits of Difference: From the Declaration of Independence to *United States v. Virginia*." C-SPAN also recognizes Stacey Tinsley who served as an adviser and mentor throughout the StudentCam competition, helping guide this nationally recognized achievement.
- Josie Connor and Mia Martin are third-prize winners and will receive \$750 for the documentary, "The Writer's Declaration: 148 Days To Save Hollywood," about the Writers Guild of America strike of 2023. C-SPAN also recognizes Keri Clark who served as an adviser and mentor throughout the StudentCam competition, helping guide this nationally recognized achievement.
- Myla Hannah and Elsa Elkovitch are honorable mention prize winners and will receive \$250 for the documentary, "Gun Violence in America: How Much is Too Much?" C-SPAN also recognizes Keri Clark who served as an adviser and mentor throughout the StudentCam competition, helping guide this nationally recognized achievement.

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 San Diego and Escondido, C-SPAN is available through Cox Communications, our local partner in StudentCam.

“We at Cox are incredibly proud to celebrate the achievements of these talented StudentCam winners,” said Chanelle Hawken, market vice president for Cox Communications in San Diego. “Through their thought-provoking and creative documentaries, this year's winners explored the lasting impact of the Declaration of Independence as the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary. We are proud to partner with C-SPAN and share in their dedication to encouraging critical thinking and civic engagement among the next generation of leaders.”

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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