



**DENISE MERRILL**  
SECRETARY OF THE STATE  
CONNECTICUT

For Immediate Release:  
April 11, 2014

For more information:  
Av Harris: (860) 509-6255  
Cell: (860) 463-5939

- PRESS RELEASE -

## **MERRILL: FIFTH GRADERS WRITE ABOUT HISTORICAL EVENTS AND INVENTIONS IN CONNECTICUT**

SECRETARY OF THE STATE HONORS STUDENTS FROM ACROSS CONNECTICUT  
FOR THEIR WINNING ESSAYS

**Hartford:** Surrounded by 15 aspiring writers, Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today presented awards to the winners of her office's 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Essay Contest at a ceremony in the Old Judiciary Room of the State Capitol. More than 60 fifth graders from schools across Connecticut submitted essays this year. Students were asked to discuss an important event or invention from Connecticut that has significantly affected the history of our state. They were asked to answer the question "How is the impact of this event or invention still felt today?"

"Connecticut is a small state, yet we have had an extraordinary number of innovations in science and industry, not to mention the dozens of historically impactful events that have happened here," said Secretary Merrill, Connecticut's chief elections official. "I am very impressed with these students and the grasp they have on Connecticut's history. They also seem to understand that they too can one day play an important part in history, or create some fantastic invention that can save or improve lives all over the world. There is no telling what kind of inspiring ideas may flow from this writing exercise that may one day themselves make a huge difference in the lifetime of these young writers."

A set of winning essays was selected from four of Connecticut's five congressional districts. Each set consisted of a 1<sup>st</sup> place winner, some having a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner, along with one or two students who received honorable mention. Every student honored at today's event received a gift certificate from Barnes & Noble bookstore.

### **2014 Essay Contest Winners**

The essay contest winners are listed below:

**Congressional District 1**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Sabria Roggendorf, Whiting Lane School, West Hartford

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Maheer Syed Hussain, Aiken Elementary School, West Hartford

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Laurel A. Thomas, Aiken Elementary School, West Hartford

Honorable Mention, Israel Henriques, Aiken Elementary School, West Hartford

**Congressional District 2**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Julia Gerrish, Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, East Haddam

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Aidan Behilo, Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, East Haddam

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Lenora Ballek, Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, East Haddam

Honorable Mention, Molly Butremovic, North Stonington Elementary School, North Stonington

Honorable Mention, Cailey Fay, Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, East Haddam

**Congressional District 3**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Ahmed Khan, Bear Path School, Hamden

**Congressional District 5**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Christopher Aube, Thompson Brook School, Avon

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Ian Belles, Whisconier Middle School, Brookfield

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Brianna Pelchar, Har-bur Middle School, Burlington

Honorable Mention, Ashley Buick, Goshen Center School, Goshen

Honorable Mention, Lexah Caraluzzi, Whisconier Middle School, Brookfield