

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026**

C-SPAN Announces 2026 StudentCam Documentary Competition Winners

Students explore the American story through the Declaration of Independence

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



*Pictured top left: Ben Kurian
Pictured bottom left: Helena de la Houssaye and Harper Haden
Pictured Center: Erynna Holbrook
Pictured top right: Charlotte Ligon and Kessler Dickerson
Pictured bottom right: Tanaya Safi and Juhie Parikh*

WASHINGTON (March 11, 2026) — As the United States commemorates its historic 250th anniversary this year, C-SPAN today proudly announces the winners of the 2026 StudentCam documentary competition — a nationwide civic education initiative that empowers young Americans to examine the nation’s founding principles and their continuing impact. This year, nearly 4,000 students from across the country participated, with 150 cash prizes totaling \$100,000 awarded to students and teachers.

In recognition of the United States’ Semiquincentennial, C-SPAN challenged middle and high school students nationwide to explore the enduring power and relevance of the Declaration of Independence by examining:

(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 thoughtful research, storytelling, and original filmmaking, students engaged directly with the ideals of equality, rights, liberty, and self-governance — demonstrating how the Declaration continues to shape both historic milestones and present-day debates.

The 2026 grand-prize winner is Eryanna Holbrook, a student at Troy Athens High School in Troy, Michigan, where C-SPAN is available through its partner Comcast. Eryanna will receive \$5,000 for the documentary, "The Pursuit of Fair Pay," about the impact of name, image and likeness (NIL) on college sports. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 21 throughout the day.

In cooperation with its cable and satellite television partners, C-SPAN invited all middle and high school students to enter the documentary contest. In response, C-SPAN received over 1,800 entries from 38 states and Washington, D.C. The most popular topics addressed were:

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

"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!"

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

Ben Kurian, a student at Olentangy Liberty High School in Powell, Ohio — where C-SPAN is available through Spectrum — will receive \$3,000 as a first-prize winner in the High School Central region 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. Ben will receive an additional \$500 in prize money. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 20 throughout the day.

Charlotte Ligon and Kessler Dickerson, students at Millbrook Magnet High School in Raleigh, North Carolina, will receive \$3,000 as first-prize winners in the High School East region for the documentary, "Roots of Freedom: The Struggles and Tensions of Rural American Agriculture." In Raleigh, C-SPAN is available through Spectrum. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 19 throughout the day.

Tanaya Safi and Juhie Parikh, students at Inderkum High School in Sacramento, California — where C-SPAN is available through Comcast — will receive \$3,000 as first-prize winners in the High School West region for the documentary, "Dreamers Deferred: The American Dream On Hold." This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 18 throughout the day.

Helena de la Houssaye and Harper Haden, students at Correia Middle School in San Diego, California, are national first-prize winners in the Middle School division 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. Cox Communications makes C-SPAN available in Correia. This documentary will air on C-SPAN's networks on April 17 throughout the day.

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.

C-SPAN is primarily funded by America's cable, satellite and streaming television companies, its partners in StudentCam. Each winning video is available to view at studentcam.org and may be used in a broadcast with attribution to C-SPAN.

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.

###

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](#).

CONTACTS:

Pam McGorry, Education Program Senior Specialist – 202-626-4861, pmcgorry@c-span.org

Robin Newton, Media Relations Specialist – 202-626-8910, rnewton@c-span.org