

November 1, 2017

Dear Vermont High School Principal:

I am very pleased to announce my eighth annual State of the Union Essay Contest. As in past years, I would appreciate your help to make this year's contest a success, by encouraging students at your school to consider participating.

The idea of the contest is simple: as the President prepares to give his State of the Union speech to a joint session of Congress in January, I have invited Vermont high school students to describe what *they* think are the most pressing issues facing our country, and what they would do to solve them. The 250-500 word essays can be on any issue of national importance that the students choose. A volunteer panel of Vermont teachers will judge the essays on the students' ability to describe the issue coherently, and to articulate a proposed solution. Of course, the students' political views will not affect how the essays are judged.

As in past years, I will enter the essays of the twenty finalists into the Congressional Record – the official archive of the United States Congress. I will also hold a roundtable discussion at the Statehouse with the finalists.

I am always deeply impressed by the thoughtful essays submitted. Moreover, at a time when civic engagement seems to be on the decline, I am heartened by the fact that the contest has grown considerably since we began. Last year, almost 800 young Vermonters wrote essays on a wide range of issues. However, we can do even better, which is why I hope you will help spread the word about the contest.

The deadline for submitting essays is Wednesday, January 10 2018, at noon. To learn more about the contest, please visit www.sanders.senate.gov/stateoftheunion, or feel free to contact Katarina Lisaius at (800) 339-9834 or katarina_lisaius@sanders.senate.gov with questions.

Thank you for everything you do to educate and challenge Vermont's youth.

Sincerely,


BERNARD SANDERS
UNITED STATES SENATOR