



Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Program

The *Voice of Democracy* was established in 1947 by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which was founded in 1899 and is the United States' oldest major war veterans' organization.

The *Voice of Democracy* program provides high school students with the opportunity to express themselves on subjects relating to democracy and patriotism in a 3 – 5 minute recorded essay format. Last year more than 64,000 students nationwide competed.



Each year, more than \$2 million is awarded by the Veterans of Foreign Wars in educational scholarships and incentives through the *Voice of Democracy* program. The national winner receives a \$30,000 college, with other national scholarships ranging from \$1,000 – 16,000.

The topic of the *Voice of Democracy* this year is ***“Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?”*** In October, Peter Sumner entered his recorded essay in the competition held by VFW Post 4105 in Florissant and his speech was selected as the winner. He represented Post 4105 in the St. Louis District 12 competition last month and was awarded First Place. He then moved on with the other District Winners to the VFW Missouri's Statewide *Voice of Democracy* competition, and earlier this month, Peter was awarded First Place for the State of Missouri.

Peter will now represent Missouri in the VFW's national *Voice of Democracy* competition with the other 49 state winners, along with VFW Department winners in Europe and the Pacific.

Because of the global pandemic, the VFW organization is making arrangements for the National Awards Ceremony to be held virtually in late March. In addition, each of the State Winners – including Peter – will receive a trip to Valley Forge, PA this June to participate in the Spirit of America Youth Leadership Conference.