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Subject: American Legion Release: Nine Contestants Advance in Oratorical Contest

The American Legion

For God and country **NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS P.O. BOX 1055 INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-1055**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nine high school orators survive first round, advance to national semi-finals this afternoon

INDIANAPOLIS (April 20, 2013) – Excitement ran high as 53 top high school orators pressed near the bracket-board hoping they would survive the first round of intense competition. The 53 represent nearly all states from across America, the District of Columbia, the Department of France and the Department of Puerto Rico. Each comes to The American Legion Oratorical Contest with one objective: leave with the $18,000 college scholarship Sunday afternoon.

Representatives of South Carolina, California, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Missouri, Tennessee, Wyoming, South Dakota and Indiana earned the opportunity to return to competition late this afternoon for the semi-finals. Only three will emerge from that round to the finals set for tomorrow.

Reaching the semi-finals are Elizabeth Scannell, Goose Creek, S.C.; Kate Park, Los Altos, Calif.; Jacob McHugh, Charlotte, N.C.; Astha Berry, Franklin, Wisc.; Agnes Rieger, Kansas City, Mo.; Victoria Vest, Cleveland, Tenn.; Dakota Frederick, Cheyenne, Wyo.; Rachel Schartz, Humboldt, S.D.; and Jana Minich, Lafeyette, Ind.

This is the 76th annual competition, officially called The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – "A Constitutional Speech Contest." The three contestants reaching the finals will leave Indianapolis, the headquarters city for the 2.4 million-member American Legion, with a large part of their college education expenses assured. Besides the $18,000 top award, the first and second runners-up receive $16,000 and $14,000 scholarships respectively.

The nation's largest veterans organization holds the competition every year to encourage young Americans to improve their communications skills and to study the U.S. Constitution. More than 6,000 high school students begin competition annually at The American Legion post-community level.

Semi-finalists will be announced later this evening. Sunday's finals will be webcast live at 10 a.m. on www.legion.org. The website also includes a complete list of contestants

by state.

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MEDIA CONTACTS: Joe March (317) 748-1926 or John Raughter (317) 441-8847.

NOTE: Phone interviews with the nine semi-finalists can be arranged by contacting the individuals above. Interview time will follow the competition at approximately 6 p.m. EST. Contestants will have access to phones to call media.