From: Raughter, John B.
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Subject: American Legion National Oratorical Contest: Nine Speaking Champs Advance
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Nine high school orators survive first round,

advance to national semi-finals this afternoon

INDIANAPOLIS (April 14, 2018) –Nine of 53 top high school orators advanced from the first round of intense competition in a national speech contest about the U.S. Constitution conducted by The American Legion today. The speakers represent champions from 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of France and the Department of Puerto Rico. Each comes to The American Legion Oratorical Contest sharing an objective: leave with the $18,000 college scholarship Sunday afternoon.

Representatives of Florida, Georgia, California, Minnesota, South Dakota, Indiana, Arkansas, Ohio and Kentucky 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 Caleb V. Wilson of Tallahassee, Fla.; Mattilyn L. Winburn of Bainbrdge, Ga.; Nathan L. York of National City, Calif.; Emily M. Parker, Lino Lakes, Minn.; Griffin L. Smith, Spearfish, S.D.; Isaac Bock of Indianapolis; Britney N. McGloflin, of Cabot, Ark.; Renee D. Betterson of Berea, Ohio and Carlissa N. Frederich of Paducah, Ky.

This is the 81st 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-million-member American Legion, with a large part of their college education expenses assured. Besides the $18,000 top award, the second and third 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 8,000 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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NOTE: Phone interviews with the contestants can be arranged by contacting the individuals above. Interview time will follow the competition at approximately 6 p.m. EDT.