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PRESS RELEASE

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50,000 Students Participate in *Being an American* Essay Contest, Nation's Largest High School Essay Contest

WASHINGTON, D.C.— 50,000 high school students from all 50 states and U.S. Territories participated in the national *Being an American* Essay Contest, the Bill of Rights Institute announced today. Since its inception in 2006, over 100,000 students have participated and more than \$300,000 has been awarded to participating teachers and students.

The contest asks students to share their thoughts on American citizenship by answering the question: **“What civic value do you believe is most essential to being an American?”**

All submitted essays are currently being judged and prize winners will be announced in March, 2010 during a three-day Awards Program and Gala Celebration for the top student winners and their teachers in Washington, D.C.

“We are delighted at the extraordinary number of students who participated in the contest this year,” said Bill of Rights Institute President, Victoria Hughes. “And we would like to thank them for contributing to the current national conversation on what it means to be an American.”

The contest's national sponsor, David H. Koch said, “I am proud to support the *Being An American* Essay Contest and its goal of helping students understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship.”

The annual essay contest is sponsored by the Bill of Rights Institute, a nonprofit educational organization. The contest's national sponsor is David H. Koch, philanthropist and executive vice president of Koch Industries, Inc. Additional sponsors include Amway Global, the Stuart Family Foundation, the Jack Miller Family Foundation, and the History Channel.

More information on the Being an American Essay Contest can be found at <http://www.BeingAnAmerican.org>