



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 22, 2026

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Connecticut Students Shine in National Civics Competition, Earn Top Honors for Constitutional Knowledge



L: Staples High School (Westport) Mehmet Madigan, Leo Viner, Lauren Potter, and Chloe Beitel (Class of 2027)

R: Trumbull High School Team - Front row: Suhani Jhala, Jyotsna Krishna, Yashita Chaudhary, Naomi Mickens, Danielle Lyon, Zuri Njorge, Sasha Fedorov, Alexis Abellard, Katie Boland. **Middle Row:** Josh Jacob, Mitchell Haynes, Bhavan Senthilnathan Sudha, Elias Eid. **Back Row:** Maria Kourounis, Jude Magnotti, Rithik Gunda, Ali Hassan, Anivarth Partasarathy, Vikram Kumar, Sean Galla and Alec Valera.

(Hartford) – High school students from Connecticut travelled to Washington, D.C. this month to represent the state in the We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals. Connecticut State Champions Trumbull High School were invited to the national competition, along with second-place winners from Staples High School (Westport). Both teams studied six units of curriculum from the Center for Civic Education focused on constitutional democracy, government, and citizenship, in preparation for simulated congressional hearings at the National level. Students were required to present testimony before a panel of judges serving as a congressional committee.

After two rounds of competition, Trumbull High School, coached by teacher Katie Boland, reached the

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finals and finished eighth overall. Staples High School (Westport) earned the highest cumulative scores for their testimony on Unit 4, which covers the organization of the federal government and how the three branches interact through powers, checks, and balances. The Staples team was coached by teacher Suzanne Kammerman.

The Connecticut affiliate of *We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution* is run by the Connecticut Democracy Center with assistance from State Coordinator and South Windsor educator, Erin Simcik. The program helps students learn about the United States government through classwork and independent research. "Our students put in lots of hours studying this academic year," said Rebecca Taber, Director of Secondary Education Programs for The Connecticut Democracy Center. "They did an incredible job preparing statements and answering questions from scholars, public officials, judges, and other constitutional experts. Passion, curiosity, and poise is what sets Connecticut students apart and we are so proud of Trumbull and Staples High School for showcasing this on the national level."

Schools participating in the program utilize the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* curriculum, developed by the Center for Civic Education. This innovative course of instruction is focused on the history and principles of the United States constitutional democratic republic. Each school team is split into six groups, each covering six units on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Students become experts on their unit and testify before judges acting as members of Congress. Judges score student performance based on demonstrated understanding, application of constitutional principles, and oral communication.

To review the questions included in National Hearings, [click here](#). For more information, visit: <https://ctdemocracycenter.org/our-programs/we-the-people/> or <https://civiced.org/we-the-people>

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The Connecticut Democracy Center (CTDC) provides people of all ages with a lifetime pathway to active citizenship and the tools to take civic action in their communities. With a broad range of initiatives, including The Connecticut Network (CT-N), Connecticut's Old State House, Connecticut History Day, Connecticut's Kid Governor®, and We The People: The Citizen and The Constitution, The CTDC envisions a society where everyone is empowered to participate in our democracy. Learn more by visiting ctdemocracycenter.org and engaging on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and [Instagram](#).