



SUMMER ESSAY CONTEST 2020

TOPIC:

- Voter Suppression & Voting Rights

ESSAY FORMAT:

- Up to 500 words
- Double-space, on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper
- 12-point type; 1-inch margins
- One side only

EVALUATION OF SUBMISSIONS:

- Effective advocacy – defending the writer’s side of the argument
- Quality of expression – how well the writer conveys his or her points
- Reasoning – supports and clearly expresses the writer’s position
- Application of the facts to the law – how well writer uses the law to support the facts

SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS:

- Deadline, June 15, 2020; 11:59pm
- Info@Savannah100Foundation.org
- Savannah 100 Foundation, Inc., ATTN: Writing Contest
PO Box 15001, Savannah, GA 31415-5001

THREE TIERS OF PRIZES:

- First Prize: \$100 and posting on the Savannah 100 Foundation website for one year
- First Runner-up: \$50
- Second Runner-up: \$25

TO STAMP OR NOT TO STAMP

The Chatham County Board of Elections requires that a voter must attach a U.S. postage stamp to (j) request his or her absentee ballot and (jj) return the actual absentee ballot.

Ahmad Rashad is 72 years of age, physically disabled, and unemployed. He lives with friends, and survives by going to food banks and sometimes the generosity of others. Mr. Rashad is a proud man, keeps up with current events, cherishes his right to vote, and looks forward to this fall's elections. But for Mr. Rashad, the cost of buying postage stamps is a luxury he cannot easily afford. Given that fact, he may not be able to vote in the fall elections.

You are a recently hired associate at a local Savannah law firm. You and the senior partner meet with Mr. Rashad. At the meeting, Mr. Rashad states that the requirement that he purchase stamps in order to vote is unfair to him and other people like him. He further states that this is just another form of voter suppression, like a poll tax. Mr. Rashad wants to hire your firm (pro bono) to sue the Chatham County Board of Elections.

The senior partner wants you to research this matter and you learn that:

Poll taxes are taxes for which payment is required in order to vote. Historically, poll taxes were used by states to raise funds. However, in 1877, following Reconstruction (when countless blacks were elected to high political office), many southern states, including Georgia, enacted poll taxes as a way to deny poor whites, black people, and Native Americans the right to vote.

In 1966, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that poll taxes were illegal in the United States on the grounds that they violated the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now, the senior partner wants your written opinion, either for or against Mr. Rashad's point of view, in no more than 500 words. Include at least one argument that does not support your opinion.

NOTE: We expect that in writing this essay, you will use your own work. This means that you will use your own thoughts, words, and expressions. You should feel free to research the areas mentioned to become familiar with the subject matter. However, if you choose to do that research, you are expected to cite any sources that are not your original work.