



## SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION ENGAGES THOUSANDS ACROSS USA Breakthrough National Website Enables Citizen Guidance in D.C.

8/31/09 Press Release

Contact [press@ourvoiceourcountry.org](mailto:press@ourvoiceourcountry.org)

A \$1,000 summer scholarship competition for incoming college freshmen led over 47,000 to visit [www.ourvoiceourcountry.org](http://www.ourvoiceourcountry.org) this summer, with students and others flocking to the site from every state. 564 freshmen posted concise, articulate descriptions of what they observe to be urgent national problems. They also proposed achievable solutions or nominated experts in the field, able to effectively address each problem.

These student nominations have drawn out unfiltered and thoughtful proposed solutions to national problems, from a diverse range of knowledgeable experts including:

- a deputy fire chief, regarding pay and work limitations for female firefighters
- a medical researcher, regarding national health care
- a Harvard professor and former Pakistani official who served under Bhutto and Musharraf, regarding troubles in the FATA region in that country

**At [www.ourvoiceourcountry.org](http://www.ourvoiceourcountry.org), national problems are referred to as *Topics*, and the accompanying recommended solutions for them are called *ProblemSolver Solutions*.**

This new non-partisan, non profit website provides the opportunity for participants to express their concerns, gives visibility to those ready to provide answers, and to see 'what flies' in the court of public opinion. The site went online in February, 2009.

Site founder and board president Jon Mann says "The great response to this competition shows that the public has the 'common sense' to recognize without instruction what is wrong here, and how to fix it. Once our full process begins in 2010, The People's collective guidance will clarify authentic mandates to our representatives in Washington, which they'll have a duty to act upon. To get there, we ask the public to visit [www.ourvoiceourcountry.org](http://www.ourvoiceourcountry.org), rate Recommended Topics and ProblemSolver Solutions, post your own, donate what you can, and spread the word to everyone you know."

Click below to view over 1,200 *Recommended Topics* and *ProblemSolver Solutions* posted by scholarship competitors *and* by other members of the general public.

*Topics:* [www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/recommend-topic-rate.aspx](http://www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/recommend-topic-rate.aspx)

*Solutions:* [www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/solution-propose-rate.aspx](http://www.ourvoiceourcountry.org/participate/solution-propose-rate.aspx)

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*Our Voice Our Country* was developed with input and guidance from Walter Cronkite, Ruby Dee, Joanne Woodward, Yolanda King, Jane Alexander, judges, professors, lawyers, students, senior citizens, soldiers, current and retired politicians, leaders of national non-partisan organizations and dozens of blue and white collar workers of all political parties, from across the Country.

The impartial Selection Committee choosing the competition's winning entry consists of:

Marlene Adler, Chief of Staff to Walter Cronkite

Mindy Fullilove, Award-winning Author, Health Researcher and Professor at Columbia University

Brian Nickerson, Dean at Iona College, Public Policy Specialist

Jim Ramstad, Fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Republican House Representative from Minnesota 1990-2008

Selection criteria to determine the winner of the competition is as follows:

- Entries not duplicative
- *ProblemSolver* nominees have posted one or more *ProblemSolver Solutions*
- Combined public rating for *Recommended Topic* and *ProblemSolver Solutions*
- Urgency and clarity of posted *Topics*
- Stated facts are known to be true or if debatable are backed up with a source
- Accompanying *ProblemSolver Solutions* are achievable, are clearly and compellingly stated, and could be reasonably acted upon by representatives in Washington

*Made possible through funding from The Yudelson and Patricia Brooks Foundations.* Special thanks to our scholarship competition outreach partner We The People ([www.civiced.org](http://www.civiced.org)), and for visibility provided by Fastweb and Campus Compact.

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