The First Freedom Center announces the 20th annual **First Freedom Student Competition**. This national **essay and video** contest offers **9th – 12th** **grade students** an opportunity to compete for **$2,500** **awards** as they examine the First Amendment and the history and implementation of freedom of religion and conscience in American democracy and the world today. Students then present their evaluation in written essay or video format.

This year's topic introduces students to **George Washington's** famous **Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island of 1790** , where he addresses a new standard for religious freedom and religious equality for citizens of the young nation. Students will identify the basic principles of religious liberty espoused in this primary document and will research and assess how well the United States has lived up to Washington's ideal. For the complete topic, essay and video guidelines, registration, classroom poster, student flyer and other details, visit [www.firstfreedom.org](http://weblaunch.blifax.com/listener1/redirect.aspx?l=83f57f16-f81f-4402-952d-629224db9fed&id=9f05f89b-5d32-456d-872a-3c13b08204f4&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.firstfreedom.org), and click on the red First Freedom Student Competition button (center column)

Students must **register online** on or before **Monday, November 12, 2012**, and the **postmark** **deadline** for mailing the essay or video with its accompanying entry materials is **Monday, November 26, 2012**. **Winners** will be **announced** on Thomas Jefferson's birthday, **April 13, 2013**.

Please forward this email to your social studies, English, media, library, guidance and other colleagues, and share this opportunity with your students today.

We look forward to your students' participation in the First Freedom Student Competition!

*[And to learn more about George Washington's Letter to the Hebrew Congregation and religious freedom, visit* [www.gwirf.org](http://www.gwirf.org) *and, if possible, visit the Loeb Visitors Center (*[*www.loebtouro.org*](http://weblaunch.blifax.com/listener1/redirect.aspx?l=17622078-bb07-4404-8d79-2fcc646bbe02&id=9f05f89b-5d32-456d-872a-3c13b08204f4&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.loebtouro.org)*) at the Touro Synagogue National Historic Site in Newport, Rhode Island. For more information and/or to plan a visit, please see* [*www.tourosynagogue.org*](http://weblaunch.blifax.com/listener1/redirect.aspx?l=8d05e6a3-f2cf-4bdb-8b33-28dc9604090b&id=9f05f89b-5d32-456d-872a-3c13b08204f4&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.tourosynagogue.org)*.]*

Sincerely,

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Visit us online at: [www.firstfreedom.org](http://weblaunch.blifax.com/listener1/redirect.aspx?l=1184c113-afb4-4454-bf1f-d4361775382b&id=9f05f89b-5d32-456d-872a-3c13b08204f4&u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.firstfreedom.org)