

# PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA LEGAL WRITING COMPETITION 2008-09

*Entries should address the topic:*

## ***After Two Decades of Judicial Review, has the Veterans Benefits Adjudication System Improved?***

The U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims recently celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. When the Veterans Judicial Review Act, Pub. L. No. 100-687, was passed in November 1988, it was revolutionary. Veterans benefits decisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs had never been subject to any form of independent oversight. The new judges of this specialized court were faced with the extraordinary task of imposing judicial review on an agency that was unaccustomed to outside involvement in its decision-making.

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Court's creation presents the opportunity to reflect on how or whether the Department of Veterans Affairs adjudication system has been affected by judicial review. Thus, we pose the question:

## ***After Two Decades of Judicial Review, has the Veterans Benefits Adjudication System Improved?***

Entrants may wish to consider information available from the VA's web site, [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), the Court's web site, [www.vetapp.gov](http://www.vetapp.gov), and, of course, cases decided by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. The Paralyzed Veterans of America hosts this contest in the hopes of encouraging vigorous discussion of veterans issues. Entrants may choose any result and should feel free to offer well-supported praise, criticism, or suggestions.

Prizes of \$3,000.00 each will be awarded in two divisions, law student and professional. The prizes will be awarded to the entries deemed by the judges to be the best in each division. In addition, the winners will receive assistance from Paralyzed Veterans in publishing the paper in appropriate professional publications and/or presenting the paper at appropriate professional association gatherings. The competition is open to all law students enrolled in ABA-accredited law schools, for entry in the law student division, as well as law school graduates and law professors for entry in the professional division.

**Submissions must be received no later than May 15, 2009.**

*The Paralyzed Veterans of America is a congressionally-chartered, non-profit veterans service organization. Paralyzed Veterans' members are veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. Through our Washington, DC, office and our nationwide network of service offices, Paralyzed Veterans advocates for VA health care and other benefits on behalf of our members and other veterans. The Paralyzed Veterans of America does not have a position on the question posed but hopes to generate discussion in the legal community. For more information about Paralyzed Veterans, please visit [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org).*

## RULES FOR THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA

### LEGAL WRITING COMPETITION

1. Students enrolled for the current school year in any law school accredited by the American Bar Association, law professors, and law school graduates are eligible to enter. Employees of the Paralyzed Veterans of America are not eligible to enter.
2. Co-authors are permitted, although only one cash prize will be awarded per entry. Submissions shall be the sole work product of the entrants. For student submissions, papers must be prepared during the current school year; normal comment and guidance by law school faculty is permitted.
3. Papers should be a minimum of 15 pages in length and shall not exceed 30 pages, including footnotes. They must be typed, double-spaced and with one-inch margins, on 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper, preferably in a 12-point or larger serified font, such as Times New Roman. All citations and footnotes should conform to the current edition of The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation.
4. An original and four copies of each entry must be submitted and should be accompanied by an electronic copy provided on a CD or DVD in Word format. Papers are judged anonymously, and no identifying information should appear on either the original or copies of the paper. Entrants must submit a separate cover letter listing any author's name, address, and telephone number and a brief biographical sketch. For law students, the letter must list the law school and graduation year. Each entry shall also be accompanied by a letter from the author or authors certifying that the article submitted has not been previously published and is original work.
5. Papers will be judged generally on their substance, clarity of the proposal or thesis, logical force, support of argument, and quality of research. Grammar, syntax, and form will also be taken into consideration.
6. **Submissions must be received no later than May 15, 2008, to ensure review.** Entries and any questions regarding the Writing Competition should be addressed to:

Ronda L. Whichard, Legal Executive Assistant  
Office of General Counsel  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
801 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

Questions may also be sent to Ms. Whichard at [RondaW@pva.org](mailto:RondaW@pva.org).

Facsimile or emailed submissions are not permitted. Late submissions will not be considered.

7. The judges anticipate awarding two prizes of \$3,000.00 to the papers deemed best in the judges' discretion in the categories of professional and student. Other cash prizes may also be awarded at the discretion of the judges to papers of particular merit, although no prizes may be awarded if no qualifying entries are submitted. Winners will be notified by June 30, 2009. All decisions of the judges are final.

8. Submissions will not be returned to the authors. Submission of a paper grants the Paralyzed Veterans of America the right to publish the paper in its own publications or any other appropriate forum and to publicize biographical information about the author, and entries must be accompanied with a fully completed and executed consent form (attached). If there are co-authors, each author must submit a consent form. Submissions may not be previously published. PVA reserves the right to publish the paper first, after which the author may proceed with publication elsewhere upon notice to PVA. Failure of the author to preserve this grant may result in disqualification.

**CONSENT FOR PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA TO PUBLISH IN PRINTED OR ELECTRONIC FORMAT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the author or co-author of the attached original work, titled \_\_\_\_\_, and I have entered this work in the Paralyzed Veterans of America Legal Writing Competition for 2008-09. This work has not been previously published. I recognize that the Paralyzed Veterans of America may wish to publish this work or information about me in a printed or electronic format, including publications not owned by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and I grant permission for the work or information to be used or excerpted in any format or forum deemed appropriate by the Paralyzed Veterans of America. I also agree to cooperate in any publishing undertaken by the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

This is a nonexclusive grant; I retain the right to seek other publishers for my work (1) after Paralyzed Veterans of America has initially published the work and (2) if I notify Paralyzed Veterans of America in advance or (3) if Paralyzed Veterans of America has informed me in writing that it does not intend to publish the work.

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Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name