California Civics Contest: Building a Better Future

Objective This contest encourages 8th graders to engage with current issues facing California by creating a short-form video that answers the question: *"What does the state of California need to work on today to build a better future for me?"* Through this project, students will gain a deeper understanding of public policy, think critically about the state's future, and practice sharing their ideas with a broader audience.

Project Description Participants are tasked with creating a video (maximum length: 2 minutes) in which they highlight an issue they believe California should address to build a better future. Videos should focus on a specific area—whether it's climate change, education, healthcare, social justice, or any other topic that directly impacts their future. Creativity and clarity are encouraged as students explain why their chosen issue is important and what changes they hope to see.

Instructions for Submission

1. Content Guidelines

- **Length**: Videos must be no longer than 2 minutes.
- **Topic**: The video must address the question: *"What does the state of California need to work on today to build a better future for me?"*
- **Focus**: Clearly describe one issue, how it affects the future of young Californians, and suggest ways California can address this issue.
- **Research:** Gather factual information to support your argument.
- **Community Engagement:** Consider interviewing members of your community who are directly affected by the issue you are addressing. Including their perspectives can strengthen your video's message. Ask a parent or guardian before conducting interviews with the public.
- **Format**: Vertical, Reel/Tik Tok format.

2. How to Submit

- Upload your video file to **Dropbox**.
- Complete the agreement form at the end of these instructions. Please print out the form (3 pages), fill out, and sign. Scan or take a picture and attach it to your email.
- Submit the video by emailing Assemblymember.Ward@Assembly.Ca.Gov. with a link to the Dropbox file and your completed agreement form.
- Include your full name, school, teacher, and parent's phone number with your submission.

- Submissions will be accepted between Monday, December 14, and Friday, December 18, 2026.

3. **Judging Criteria** Videos will be judged based on the following:

- **Relevance**: How well the video addresses the prompt.
- **Creativity**: Originality and creativity in how the message is communicated.
- **Clarity**: The ideas are clearly explained and easy to understand.
- **Impact**: The video demonstrates a strong understanding of the issue and potential solutions.
- **Agreement Form**: Videos submitted without a completed agreement form will not be considered.

AGREEMENT FORM

I, _____ ("Participant"), voluntarily elect to participate in the Program conducted by the office of Assemblymember Ward in coordination with the California State Assembly ("State"). In consideration for being permitted to participate in the Program, I hereby acknowledge and agree to the following:

Assumption of Risk: I assume full responsibility for my participation in the Program and certify that I am in good health and in proper physical condition to participate. I understand that participation in the Program carries with it certain inherent risks that cannot be eliminated regardless of the care taken to avoid injury. These risks include property damage, personal injury, or even death, and could occur at any time, including during my travel to, from, or as part of the Program. Despite these risks, I knowingly and voluntarily elect to participate and assume all risks, both known and unknown, regardless of whether the risk is caused by the negligence of the State, or its Assembly Members, officers, employees, agents, or any other entity or individual acting on behalf of the State (collectively, "Releasees").

Release and Waiver of Liability: I, on behalf of myself and my personal representatives, heirs, executors, administrators, agents, and assigns, hereby release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue the State or its Releasees for any liability, claim, action, loss, damage, cost, or expense whatsoever arising out of or related to any damage or injury, including death, that may occur as a result of my participation in the Program, including any damage or injury that may occur during my travel to, from, or as part of the Program, regardless of whether the damage or injury is caused by the negligence of the State or its Releasees.

General Photograph and Video Release: I grant the State permission to take photographs of me and to record me in any audio, audio-visual, video, or other media ("Photograph") in connection with my participation in the Program. I grant the State the nonexclusive, irrevocable right to use my name, voice, likeness, or image, as captured on or in the Photograph, for any legislative purpose and in any form. This may include posting the Photograph on an internet website of the State or on a social media page maintained with legislative resources, or using the Photograph in a Senator's newsletter.

Program Video Release: I hereby irrevocably grant the State, and its licensees, assignees, and successors, permission to use my image, likeness, performance, and voice as captured in or on any video ("video") I submit to the State for purposes of this Program and to use my name or other information concerning me in connection with the video, for any purpose throughout the world and in perpetuity without payment or any other consideration. I understand that my video may be edited, combined with or incorporated

into other works, copied, displayed, published, and distributed in any manner or media whatsoever. This may include displaying my video electronically on an Assembly website or on an Assemblymember's social media page. I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product wherein my video appears.

I release the State, and its licensees, assignees, and successors, from any claims that may arise regarding the use of my video, name, and other information concerning me, including claims of invasion of privacy, defamation, or infringement of moral rights, rights of publicity, or copyright.

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Choice of Law/Severability: This Agreement shall be construed in accordance with the law of the State of California and it is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by law. If any portion of it is held invalid, the balance shall continue in full force and effect.

I have read this Agreement and fully understand and agree to its terms. I am aware that this Agreement includes an assumption of the risks, release and waiver of liability, a general photograph and video release, and a video release specific to this Program. I understand I have given up substantial legal rights by signing this Agreement. I sign freely and voluntarily without any inducement. I warrant that I am at least 18 years of age and fully competent to sign this Agreement, or, if not, that I have secured below the signature of my parent or legal guardian.

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If Participant is under 18 years of age or under legal guardianship, the following section must be completed by their parent or legal guardian:

I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of the Participant. I have read this Agreement and fully understand and agree to its terms. By signing this Agreement, I, for myself and the Participant, (a) give permission for the Participant to participate in the Program; (b) assume all potential risks of the Participant's participation in the Program; (c) release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue the State and its Releasees; (d) grant the State the right to photograph and record the Participant and use the Participant's name, voice, likeness, or image; and, (e) grant the State the right to use any video the Participant submits for this Program for any purpose throughout the world and in perpetuity without payment or any other consideration. I understand that by signing this Agreement I have given up substantial legal rights for myself and the Participant. I sign it freely and voluntarily without any inducement. I understand that I am responsible for the obligations and acts of Participant

as described in this Agreement. I agree that both the Participant and I are bound by the terms of this Agreement.

Parent or legal guardian's name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____