

Maine Right to Life Oratory Competition

February 25, 2026

Saint Joseph's College of Maine

The Maine Right to Life (MRTL) Oratory Competition is a new statewide event modeled on the National Right to Life (NRTL) Oratory Contest. The first-place winner of the MRTL competition will advance to represent Maine at the National Right to Life Oratory Contest in Virginia.

1. Eligibility Requirements

- High school **juniors and seniors** who are in that grade level as of **February 1** of the year of the national contest are eligible to compete.
 - Advanced, non-traditional, and homeschooled students must be formally recognized by their school or program as a junior or senior. For homeschooled students, the **year of anticipated college entry** may be used to determine eligibility.
 - Students who competed as juniors may compete again as seniors **with an entirely new speech**, unless they previously won **first place at the national contest**. Second-place national winners may compete again.
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2. Speech Topic and Content Requirements

- Contestants must research, write, and present an **original pro-life speech** addressing **one** of the following topics:
 - Abortion
 - Infanticide
 - Euthanasia
 - Stem cell research
 - The speech must address the selected topic **directly** and be based on **up-to-date, factual information**.
 - No copyrighted speeches or previously published works may be used.
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3. Time Limits

- Speeches must be **five to seven minutes** in length.
 - A contestant will be **disqualified** if the speech is **under four minutes or over eight minutes**.
 - Judges will use their discretion in scoring speeches that fall between **four–five minutes** or **seven–eight minutes**, and time deviations may negatively affect the score.
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4. Presentation Rules

- Appropriate gestures are permitted.
- **Props are not allowed.**
- Contestants may use **notes**.
- The use of a **podium is optional**, but podiums may not be available. If there are not enough podiums for all rooms, none will be used.
- **Microphones are not permitted**, unless the Contest Director determines they are necessary due to room conditions.

Style Guidelines

- The style of the speech should be appropriate to the message.
 - **Dramatic presentations are not permitted.** This includes:
 - Reading or performing material written by another author (e.g., short stories or poems)
 - Acting as another person or thing (for example, portraying an unborn child)
 - Quotations may be used to support a point but may not dominate the speech and must be properly cited.
 - This rule does **not** prohibit the appropriate use of emotion.
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5. Speech Revisions and Documentation

- Speech content may **not be substantially changed** as a contestant advances through levels of competition.
- Minor revisions for clarity, factual correction, or time adjustment are allowed and encouraged.

- A **written copy** of the contestant's speech must be submitted for forwarding to the national contest if the contestant advances.
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6. Contest Format and Progression

- The competition will consist of **multiple rounds**, including at least one preliminary round, depending on the number of contestants.
 - In preliminary rounds, contestants will compete in rooms of **four to seven speakers**.
 - The **top two scorers** from each room will advance until **four contestants** remain for the final round.
 - Each room will have **three judges** and a **timekeeper**.
 - Speaking order for the preliminary round will be determined by **random draw**. In subsequent rounds, speaking order will be determined by scores from the previous round.
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7. Judging and Scoring

- Contestants are evaluated in **four categories**:
 1. Introduction
 2. Content
 3. Presentation
 4. Conclusion
 - Judges assign a score of **1-10** in each category (40 points maximum per judge).
 - Judges' scores are combined to determine the contestant's total score.
 - The highest total score determines advancement and final placement.
 - Judges' decisions are **final**.
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8. Ties, Errors, and Authority

- Ties will be resolved by the **Contest Director**.
 - Every effort will be made to ensure accuracy. In the event of an error, reasonable steps will be taken to correct it.
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- Any questions, concerns, or disputes will be handled by the Contest Director.
- The decision of the Contest Director regarding the interpretation or application of these rules is **final**.

9. Recording and Rights

- The contest may be **videotaped or recorded**.
 - All recordings remain the property of **MRTL/National Right to Life**.
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10. Advancement to the National Contest

- State right-to-life organizations sponsor local and state contests.
 - The **Maine Right to Life first-place winner** will advance to compete at the **National Right to Life Oratory Contest**.
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11. Awards

- MRTL contestants may receive **plaques of achievement**.
- The **Maine Right to Life first-place winner**, along with **one parent**, will receive travel to attend the **2026 National Right to Life Annual Conference**, held **June 12–13, 2026**, in **Arlington, Virginia**.

National-Level Awards

- **First Place:** \$1,000 and the opportunity to deliver the winning speech at the National Right to Life Conference
 - **Second Place:** \$750
 - **Third Place:** \$500
 - **Fourth Place:** \$250
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These rules apply specifically to the Maine Right to Life Oratory Competition and the National Right to Life Oratory Contest. No other national, state, or local speech contest rules apply.