



Office of the Governor

State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

August 2016

Dear Educator:

The Office of the Governor and the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice invite you and your students to participate in Utah's Seventeenth Annual *Do the Write Thing Challenge*.

The *Challenge* offers 7th and 8th grade students across the state an opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence on their lives and then write what they think should be done to change the culture of violence. Personal responsibility is emphasized by encouraging students to make a commitment to do something about the problem. The program ultimately strives to help them break the cycle of violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods.

One boy and one girl will be selected, along with their teacher and a parent, to represent Utah at the national recognition week in Washington, D.C. in July 2017. Top essays will be published and placed in the Library of Congress. In addition, all contest finalists, honorable mentions, their teacher and parents will be invited to attend a recognition luncheon where the top two authors will be announced in April 2017.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the Challenge into their regular classroom curriculum. Lesson plans can be found on the website at www.juvenile.utah.gov. Rules, entry forms, and additional information are also available on this website. The following is a list of ideas for the classroom:

- English: use as an essay or poetry-writing assignment;
- Health: discuss personal safety and well-being of others;
- Civics: conduct an exercise on personal and civic responsibility;
- History: use an historical perspective to examine youth violence.

The deadline for entries is **December 9, 2016**. Last year's challenge involved more than 2,500 students participating in classroom discussions about youth violence with more than 1,000 students submitting essays from thirteen school districts and twenty-one different schools. We look forward to increasing these numbers in 2017.

If you have any questions, please contact Cuong Nguyen at cvnguyen@utah.gov or call (801) 538-1739.

We encourage your students' participation and look forward to this year's Challenge.

Sincerely,

Gary R. Herbert
Governor