

11/4/2011 Press release: Raymond Voter Information Project/ Raymond School District Writing Challenge

**Raymond**—The Raymond Voter Information Project at [www.raymondvip.org](http://www.raymondvip.org) announces a challenge to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at Iber Holmes Gove Middle School to write on the topic: “Your Most Important Role in a Democracy: Thinking for Yourself.” Held in collaboration with the Raymond School District, the contest encourages students to inspire citizens to apply independent thinking to local voting decisions: to learn to recognize emotional manipulation and not let feelings shut down thinking, to avoid snap judgments, to listen carefully and ask questions of those proposing warrant articles or running for office. A video presentation by Vanessa Druskat, associate professor at UNH, is available on the Project’s website to help students study the topic

Students need to submit a cover sheet with their name, age, teacher, parents’ permission to publish and read, as well as a second sheet with the essay (no more than 250 words, excluding the title). The prize: state and local school recognition, publication in *Raymond Voter Information Project 2012*, and opportunities to read essays on local Raymond Community Television. “Most of all, the winner will know that someone who might not have voted, or might not have voted fully informed, did so inspired by the winning essay,” says Raymond VIP President Gretchen Gott.

Entries must be postmarked no later than November 22 to Raymond VIP, Box 813, Raymond NH 03077. Members of the Raymond Voter Information Project come from a broad range of careers and municipal experience, and have many personal viewpoints. However, within Raymond VIP, they are committed to neither support nor oppose any political party, candidate or warrant article and to focus on providing objective voter information. Raymond VIP is registered with the State of New Hampshire and with the Town Of Raymond as a nonprofit corporation and a charitable trust.