

Winners of Ought to be a Law Competition, February 2026

1. Max Prost and David Plawski – “**State Infrastructure: Sidewalks and Traffic Control**”
 - They argue that Shaler and much of Allegheny County lack walkable sidewalks on busy roads, increasing the risks for pedestrians. They propose legislation that would mandate routes to be classified as “hazardous” under 67 Pa. Code 447 to have a sidewalk placed within a set time frame based on surrounding traffic flow. They point to successful examples from other states and conclude that updated sidewalk policies would greatly improve safety, accessibility and walkability in the community.
2. Joel Searock and Quincy Montgomery – “**Raising the Minimum Wage**”
 - Critiques Pennsylvania’s minimum wage; \$7.25 no longer provides a livable income. Through insightful observations about increased costs for rent, groceries and gas, they advocate for legislation to increase the minimum wage to improve Pennsylvanians’ quality of life and boost the local workforce.
3. Olivia Lourenco – “**Skills Classes in High Schools**”
 - High schools should require students to learn essential skills such as financial literacy to help better prepare them for adult life. She points that many young adults feel underprepared to navigate things such as taxes, credit cards, and student loans. Olivia proposes a statewide mandate that would encourage schools to offer these classes to not only strengthen their personal understanding but the future economy.
4. Addy Applbaum and Jaylynn Jones – “**The Pennsylvania Road Visibility & Safety Act**”
 - Observes that poorly maintained line markings pose a serious safety hazard for new drivers. They propose legislation that would establish a statewide standard for road paint visibility, requiring regular inspections and annual repainting. They argue that clear visible lines would reduce traffic accidents, increase safety, and facilitate traveling during nights.
5. Elizabeth Dunlevy and Madelyn Hannan – “**Censorship in Curriculum**”
 - Restricting books studied in the classroom poses a threat to learning for high school students. They believe that Pennsylvania should allow teachers and local government to have authority over the books and curriculum studied to promote informed, open-minded students capable of understanding diverse experiences and viewpoint around the world.