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MEDIA ALERT
DURING DIVISIVE ELECTION STUDENT SPEECH CONTEST OFFERS HOPE
Nearly 4,000 students, 40 schools and 165 classrooms address presidential candidates

WHAT: As we near the end of a Presidential election that has been called vulgar, lewd and toxic one area of hope is the upcoming Mikva Challenge Project Soapbox Competition. The competition will bring politics into Chicago classrooms and give students a chance to directly address the presidential candidates on the issues most important to them. The competition will bring politics into Chicago classrooms and give students a chance to directly address the presidential candidates on the issues most important to them. Project Soapbox is the run-up to the final round of a citywide speech competition as thousands of Chicago teens address classmates and civic leaders.

The competition gives youth the opportunity to prepare and deliver a two-minute speech to persuade the next President of the United States to act on an issue that affects their community using the following prompt:

"What is the most pressing issue facing young people today, why is it important, and what should be done to address it?"

WHO: Some 4,000 young people from 40 schools across Chicagoland. After giving their speeches, two students from each participating classroom will advance and join 15 semifinalists. A judge will then choose two who will move ahead to the final round in the school auditorium for the selection of a first- and second-place winner. A student-choice winner will also be named.

WHEN: Classroom Competitions – Mid-October to November 15, 2016
City-Wide competition - Doors open 9 a.m. Saturday, November 19, 2016.

PHOTO OPPS: Students will be performing their speeches at classrooms across Chicago.
November 19th, Semifinals begin at 10:15 a.m.; finals at 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: Jones High School, 700 S. State St., Chicago, Illinois 60605

WHY: The classroom competitions serve as a forum for youth to report on urban life. While many of these young people are not old enough to vote, they want to put the spotlight on issues they feel Chicago and the country should be trying to tackle. Giving them this opportunity benefits the entire community:

- **88 percent of Mikva alumni are registered voters, vs. only 53 percent of 18-29 yr. olds nationwide**
- **66 percent of Mikva alumni encourage their friends and family to be politically engaged, vs. only 35 percent of 18-29 yr. olds nationwide**
- **130 Chicagoland teachers participate in Mikva Challenge programs**

ABOUT: Named after Abner and Zoe Mikva, the Mikva Challenge is a non-partisan, nonprofit that develops youth to be informed, and active citizens and community leaders. We do this by engaging youth in action civics, an authentic and transformative learning process built on youth voice and youth expertise.
<http://www.mikvachallenge.org/>

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