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## High school students debate

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Making your point can be challenging. Not everyone can argue in a civil way. But at the State House high schoolers did their best in a debating contest.

Vermont vs. New Hampshire - Hartford vs. Hanover

The region's best debaters square off at the State House. High schoolers are asked to debate a question: has organized political lobbying helped or hurt our country?

Hartford argues lobbying has led to important laws.

"Lobbyists groups have played huge part in the passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964 that granted civil rights to every single American no matter what race, religion or ethnicity," said Aaron White of Hartford High School.

"If we did not have lobbyist to bring information to create a structured system of government how else would our democracy run," said Aaron White of Hartford High School.

Not so fast debates Hanover. They argue citizens can't compete against the big bucks spent by organized lobbyists. Each point is backed up with facts, research is part of the presentation.

"As the 2009 Cato institute article explains quote when average citizens do speak out against particular programs, they are out gunned by the paid professionals who defend each program," said Katherine Chen of Hanover High School.

Under time pressures and the watchful eyes of the judges this debate was much like one you could witness between lawmakers in Montpelier or Washington. Life long skills learned at an early age.

"Their ability to communicate, their ability to research, their ability to argue. Life skills I would like to see every high school in the state have a program like this," said debate organizer Bill Haines.

In the end Hartford bests Hanover. Just a contest on this day but who knows maybe the real deal down the road for these talented debaters.

Hartford is your champion the other semi-finalists were Hanover, Milton and Colchester. And you may wonder why Hanover was part of the Vermont contest. The Granite State does not have a debate organization, so Hanover asked if it could compete in Vermont and Vermont said yes.

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