



**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

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**Statement from Executive Director J. Scott Wunn**

**West Des Moines, IA (June 19, 2025)** — On Thursday afternoon, an unidentified attendee entered the stage during the National Speech and Debate Tournament's Humorous Interpretation Finals, interrupting the round. The individual was subdued and removed from the premises by the actions of onsite law enforcement.

There were no weapons involved. However, the incident scared students and other attendees present.

The safety and wellbeing of our whole community, especially our students, is our top priority. NSDA took immediate actions to help ensure the security and safety of everyone, including working with local authorities to sweep the venue.

After speaking with the NSDA community, including finalists and coaches, we have decided to suspend the competition for today. We will continue Friday with a revised schedule.

We take this incident extremely seriously. Above all, we are committed to creating an environment where students feel safe and supported and additional security measures are in place.

These include:

- Limiting entry to the convention center to a single location
- Increasing police presence
- Installing metal detectors at the entry point
- Implementing bag searches

As well as our ongoing communication with all of our attendees, we have on-site resources available to support our community, including counseling.

We, and local authorities, will continue to take every precaution to keep everyone safe and to keep this event a celebration of all the hard work our students, their coaches, and their families have put in over many months.

Our students are what makes this event such an incredible experience, and on Friday, we are giving competitors who want to continue the opportunity and platform to share their powerful messages, as we move forward together.

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**About the National Speech & Debate Association**

The National Speech & Debate Association is the authority on public speaking and debate in the United States. The Association builds the infrastructure for speech and debate competitions around the world by providing topics, educational resources, and training for students and coaches. For 100 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has built a platform for youth voices that culminates in the National Tournament, the largest academic competition in the world. For more information, visit [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org).