



SECOND U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM ALUM ELECTED TO THE SENATE
Cory Gardner (USSYP CO – 1993) joins Susan Collins (USSYP ME – 1971)

November 6, 2014, Washington, D.C. – Senator-elect Cory Gardner of Colorado will be the second United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) alumnus to serve as a United States Senator in the program’s 53-year history. Gardner, who served two terms in the House representing Colorado’s fourth district, defeated Senator Mark Udall in Tuesday’s mid-term election to claim the junior senate seat for the Centennial State. He is the first alumnus of the program to have been elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and now joins Senator Susan Collins of Maine in serving in the Upper Body.

Gardner was a USSYP delegate from Yuma, Colorado as a high school student in 1993 when he made the trip to Washington, D.C. for the first time to take part in the 31st annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week. “I remember being a delegate in the United States Senate Youth Program and feeling completely inspired to be surrounded by people my own age who were interested in government and policy and thinking about our country’s future,” Gardner said. “I realized that the delegates who attend the Senate Youth Program are of the same mind set: how do we work together to improve our country and better the opportunities for future generations.”

Senator Collins was a high school senior in Caribou, Maine when she was selected to attend the program in 1971. “The entire time that I was in Washington for the Senate Youth Program really changed my life,” she said. “It changed what I thought of myself, it changed what I learned about government and it changed my perception of what women could do.”

Both officials credit the U.S. Senate Youth Program with inspiring their dreams of public service careers.

The USSYP was created by Senate Resolution 324 in 1962 as stated in supporting Senate testimony from that year, “to increase young Americans’ understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world.” The program is continued each year through unanimous action of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

For the past fifty-three years, this extremely competitive merit-based program has annually brought 104 of the most outstanding high school students — two from every state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity — to Washington, D.C. for an intensive week-long study of the federal government and those who lead it. Students must be serving in student body government or another elected position to qualify. The overall mission of the program is to “bring forth a reservoir of talent from America’s high schools” and to help instill within each class of USSYP student delegates a deeper understanding of and lifelong commitment to public service.

Each year the Vice President of the United States and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders serve as Honorary Co-Chairs of the program; two Senators, one from each party, serve as acting Co-Chairs, and an eight-member bipartisan Senate panel completes the Advisory Committee. The 17 military officers who serve as mentors to the student delegates throughout the week represent one of the longest standing partnerships between a national youth program and the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

In addition to excellent leadership abilities and a strong commitment to volunteer work, the student delegates rank academically in the top one percent of their states among high school juniors and seniors. Now more than 5,000 strong, alumni of the program continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. In addition to Senator Susan Collins, the first delegate to be elected U.S. Senator; and Senator-elect Gardner, the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, other distinguished alumni include: New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first delegate to be elected governor; former Chief Judge Robert Henry, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit; former Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt, and former Presidential Advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional notables include former Lt. Governor of Idaho David Leroy, former President of the Progressive Policy Institute Robert Shapiro, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

During Washington Week the student delegates have the opportunity to meet and speak with the President, a Justice of the Supreme Court, the Senate Co-Chairs, other Senate and House Members, Cabinet Secretaries, other federal agency leaders and senior members of the national media. This in-depth exposure is precisely what fuels and sustains the delegates’ commitment to making a difference in their country, communities and schools.

The Hearst Foundations have fully funded this program since its inception, including transportation, accommodations, meals and individual \$5,000 college scholarships. As stipulated in S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

http://www.hearstfdn.org/ussyp/washington_video/ --see more here

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