

## **Marissa Vosberg, WI – 2022**

As I reflect on my time as a delegate to the 60th annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week, one word comes to mind: unity. The spirit of bipartisanship the Senate Youth Program expels shines through in every speaker, activity, and discussion and the program unites delegates from all ranges on the political spectrum in a remarkable way.

One of the first things I noticed about the Senate Youth Program was the diversity of the delegates. Not only is every region of the country represented, but the experiences and ideologies of all delegates could not have made us more unique. In the months leading up to Washington Week, I remember reading through group chat messages where delegates were debating education policy, criminal justice reform, supreme court nominees, and a plethora of other topics. What I found most inspirational was not the poise with which my fellow delegates could articulate their beliefs and reasoning, but instead the decorum and politeness with which we treated each other. The ability for us as delegates to be staunchly against each other politically but still share silly stories and life updates as friends renewed my faith in the future of politics in America, as I have no doubt my fellow delegates will be responsible for shaping public policy in the future.

The theme of unity continued with our outstanding speaker roster. Both Senator Collins of Maine and Senator Coons of Delaware spoke of the necessity of bipartisanship in the Senate, and this message was especially poignant coming from Senator Collins who is regularly considered one of the most bipartisan senators. Seeing such successful politicians both independently detail the importance of bipartisanship reaffirmed my belief in the importance of reaching across the political aisle.

One of the most interesting and timely topics covered at the 60th annual Washington Week regarded foreign policy. Listening to Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and General Mark Milley in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was a unique opportunity that I will remember forever. I found it interesting and inspiring that both military and diplomatic officials are continuing to strive for global unity and peace even when confronting dangerous enemies.

I want to extend my sincerest thanks to the Hearst Foundations, the United States Senate Youth Program staff, and our incredible military mentors for their dedication and commitment to the Washington Week program. They brought the vibrancy to the program and made us feel as if we were actually in Washington D.C. In the spirit of the program, it is through their dedication that we, as delegates, were able to unify as one diverse class. I could not be prouder to be a part of the 60th delegate class of the United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week and I will forever treasure the experiences I had, officials I was able to meet, and the relationships I formed.