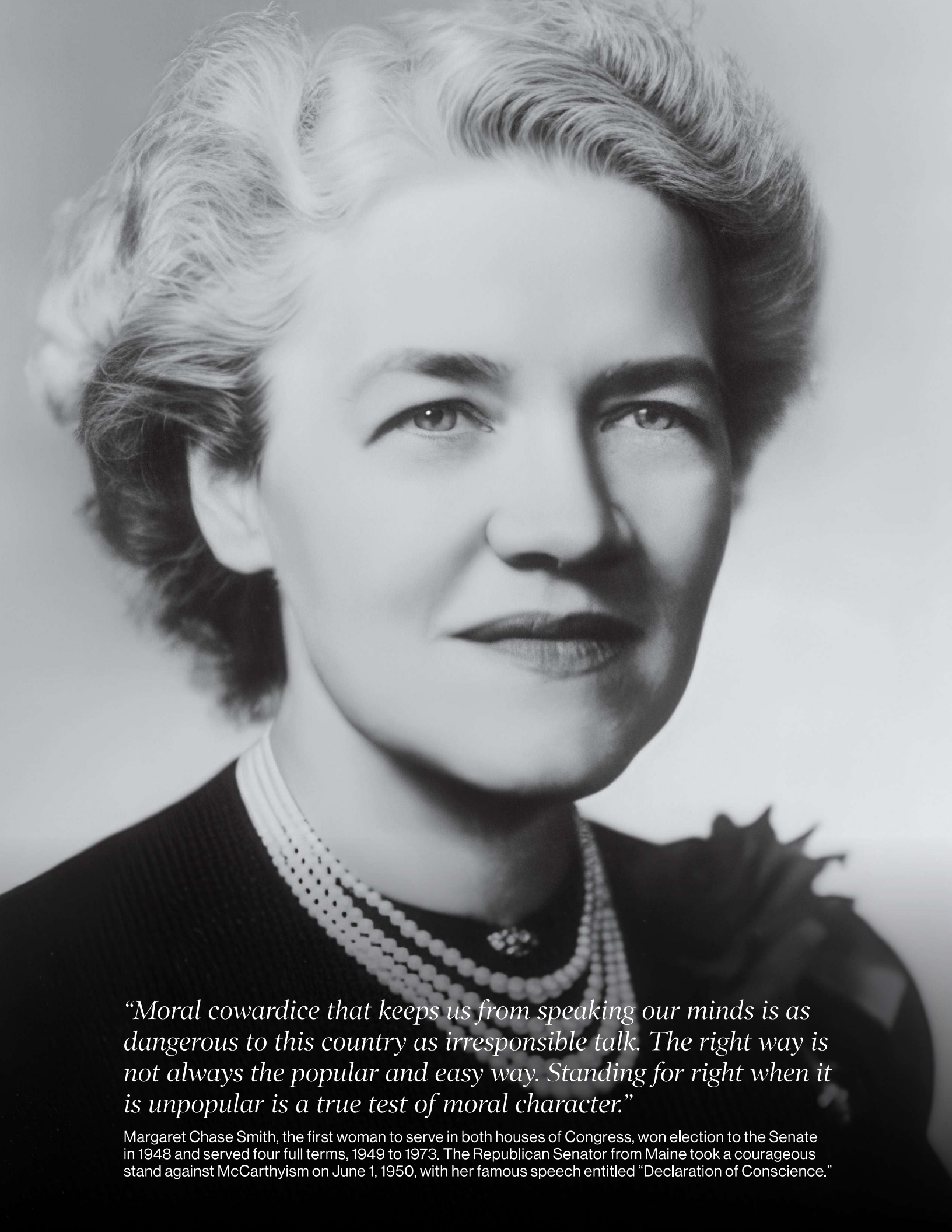




UNITED STATES SENATE ★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

SIXTY-THIRD ANNUAL WASHINGTON WEEK
WASHINGTON, D.C. | MARCH 1-8, 2025

SPONSORED BY THE UNITED STATES SENATE
FUNDED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS



“Moral cowardice that keeps us from speaking our minds is as dangerous to this country as irresponsible talk. The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character.”

Margaret Chase Smith, the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress, won election to the Senate in 1948 and served four full terms, 1949 to 1973. The Republican Senator from Maine took a courageous stand against McCarthyism on June 1, 1950, with her famous speech entitled “Declaration of Conscience.”



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UNITED STATES SENATE RESOLUTION 324

In 1962, Senate Resolution 324, submitted by Senator KUCHEL (for himself and Senators MANSFIELD, DIRKSEN, and HUMPHREY), was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration, and, subsequently, unanimously approved by the United State Senate as follows:

WHEREAS the continued vitality of our Republic depends, in part, on the intelligent understanding of our political processes and the functions of our National Government by the citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS the durability of a constitutional democracy is dependent upon alert, talented, vigorous competition for political leadership; and

WHEREAS individual Senators have cooperated with various private and university undergraduate and graduate fellowship and internship programs relating to the work of Congress; and

WHEREAS in the high schools of the United States, there exists among students who have been elected to student body offices in their junior or senior year a potential reservoir of young citizens who are experiencing their first responsibilities of service to a constituency and who should be encouraged to deepen their interest in and understanding of their country's political process: Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate hereby expresses its willingness to cooperate in a nationwide competitive high school Senate youth program which would give several representative high school students from each State a short indoctrination into the operation of the United States Senate and the Federal Government generally, if such a program can be satisfactorily arranged and completely supported by private funds with no expense to the Federal Government.

RESOLUTION 146. To amend S. Res. 324 of the Eighty-seventh Congress to provide for the participation of the Department of Defense education system for dependents in overseas areas in the Senate Youth Program.

Resolved, That S. Res. 324, Eighty-seventh Congress, agreed to May 17, 1963, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

Section 3. For the purpose of this resolution, the term "State" includes the Department of Defense education system for dependents in overseas areas.



UNITED STATES SENATE ★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT

The United States Senate Youth Program is an intensive week-long educational experience sponsored by the United States Senate that nurtures an important reservoir of student talent and energy toward the high purpose of public service.

The program 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 63rd annual Washington Week brought 104 outstanding high school students – two from every state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity – to Washington, D.C., to see the federal government up close and meet and interact with those who lead it. As the students develop a deeper commitment to public service, they also form intellectual and emotional bonds with their peers from across the nation.

Administered and funded by The Hearst Foundations since inception, the USSYP utilizes no government funds. The program is highly competitive and merit-based. Qualified students – those already serving in an elected or appointed capacity with excellent academic performance – are nominated by their teachers, principals and guidance counselors and are ultimately selected by their state departments of education. The delegates are each awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship, and their award certificates are often presented by their U.S. Senators. Students are encouraged to continue coursework in history, government and public affairs.

HONORARY CO-CHAIRS



**Vice President
JD Vance**
President of the Senate



**Senator
John Thune**
Majority Leader



**Senator
Charles E. Schumer**
Democratic Leader

SENATE CO-CHAIRS



Thom Tillis
of North Carolina



Jeanne Shaheen
of New Hampshire

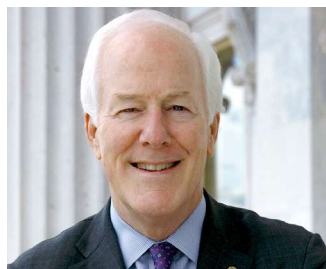
2025 UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

Senate Advisory Committee

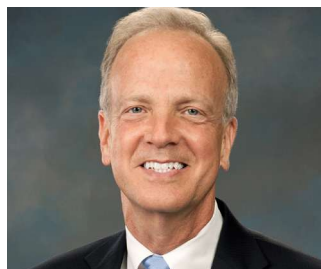
SENATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Susan Collins
of Maine



John Cornyn
of Texas



Jerry Moran
of Kansas



Pete Ricketts
of Nebraska



Richard Blumenthal
of Connecticut



**Catherine
Cortez Masto**
of Nevada



Tina Smith
of Minnesota



Peter Welch
of Vermont

“Let’s start having a serious conversation of what it takes to be bipartisan and demonstrating it.”

Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina

“Before making any decision, put yourself in the shoes of others.”

Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh

“You and other young people like you are the ones who will be pursuing a dedicated and fulfilling career in public service at the local, state and national levels, and with the goal of making the United States a more secure, a more prosperous and a more peaceful country.”

Ambassador George Moose
United States Institute of Peace

“Be kind to everyone and realize that everybody has bad days and good days. I think that’s a lesson that you carry with you forever.”

Jennifer Hemingway
Senate Sergeant at Arms

“For our democratic experiment to work, we have to have a sense of unity, a sense of shared purpose that allows us to work with one another despite our real or perceived differences.”

Dr. Katherine Scott
Senate Historian

“Most of my colleagues, including myself, also started out just the way you are — active in their school, student government, in their communities, in athletics — and it’s a great way to start as you’re thinking about public service.”

Senator Jeanne Shaheen
of New Hampshire

“Meet people from other parts of the country and other ideological beliefs, because it really does make a difference in your life in ways you can’t really predict right now, when you have the whole world in front of you.”

Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota

“I’ve had the privilege to work alongside dedicated Americans striving to improve our world. Whether or not you agree with what their view of improvement is, they are still working for it. That has proven to me again and again that a life in government is indeed a noble and worthy calling. I hope that your participation in the Senate Youth Program means that you believe that too, because your country needs you.”

Elizabeth MacDonough
Senate Parliamentarian

“Be open for opportunities that don’t exist yet. The job you may actually one day fill by the time you’re 30 may not even exist yet.”

Secretary Marco Rubio
Department of State

“Never feel like you’re above any task. Treat every interaction as though it was an interview. Dress the part. Talk the part. Do your homework.”

Michele Exner
Senior Bureau Official for Global Public Affairs
Department of State

“Sometimes being different in environments can be very challenging, but it also can be a superpower, because you’re able to look at things in a more holistic way at times. And so that’s been a wonderful thing to be able to have.”

Dr. Carla Hayden
Librarian of Congress

“I hope that this is the start of a journey for you which will bring you back to the United States Senate one day, whether that’s as a personal office staffer or a Committee staffer or maybe even the next Secretary of the Senate.”

Jackie Barber
Secretary of the Senate

“Recognize that you are standing on the shoulders of giants.”

Sean Parnell
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
for Public Affairs

“Past generations have given all to get us to this day. No one serves alone.”

Secretary Pete Hegseth
Department of Defense

“One of the things most historians would agree upon is that America has been able to successfully engage in this experiment we call democracy because our founders insisted upon a strong and robust free press.”

Ryan Nobles
NBC News Chief Capitol Hill Correspondent

“We shouldn’t forget diplomacy, because it enables us to sit at the table, to find common ground and to agree on the actions we will perform.”

Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer
Embassy of Mexico

“If you need medical service, you bring doctors. If you need structural things, you bring engineers and architects. And if people are hungry and need food, you should bring chefs.”

Linda Roth
Chief Communications Officer
World Central Kitchen

“Courage is fear that has said its prayers.”

NASA Expedition 71 Astronauts

CONGRATULATIONS FROM

William Randolph Hearst III

Dear Delegates,

The 63rd annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week took place during a moment of division in our nation's political history, but the 2025 class of USSYP delegates was more than up to the challenge, demonstrating intellectual rigor, emotional sensitivity to others, open-minded and respectful discourse and an undeterred passion to help steer the country's future. Congratulations, delegates, on your excellent service representing your states, schools and communities.

Leadership at the highest levels in all three branches of government gave generously of their time to meet with you, answer your questions and converse with you in a way that is unique to this historic program. We send our deep appreciation to the 2025 Senate Co-Chairs, Senator Thom Tillis and Senator Jeanne Shaheen. Without the help and support of our Senate Co-Chairs and their outstanding staff throughout the planning year, the program would not be possible.

In addition to the educational experience of the week, each of you will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship in the name of the United States Senate. The week in Washington and the scholarship are an inseparable award, combining the encouragement and guidance given by the esteemed speakers with financial support to pursue college-level study of government, history and public affairs. The Hearst Foundations are honored to sponsor this enduring partnership with the United States Senate, the state Departments of Education nationwide and the Department of Defense.

Numbering more than 6,200, USSYP alumni excel in their chosen career paths. Senator Susan Collins of Maine is the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. Senate; former Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg is the first delegate to be appointed as a Cabinet Secretary; former Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado is the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and the second to be elected to the Senate. Our alumni have taken many paths, in public and private sectors and in military service – all imbued with the inspiration to serve the greater good.





(TOP)
Mr. Hearst converses with Florida delegate Ella York during the State Department Luncheon.

(MIDDLE)
Mr. Frank A. Bennack, Jr., executive vice chairman and former CEO of Hearst, with Mr. Hearst at the 2025 USSYP Senate Reception.

(BOTTOM)
Hearst Corporation Directors Mr. David Barrett and Ms. Samia Staehle greet Senators with Mr. Hearst.



Washington Week could not take place without the continued endorsement of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and the close collaboration with the Department of Defense. We also thank all of the state-level departments of education throughout the country and the state education administrators, principals, teachers and school counselors for their pivotal roles in the student selection process.

The program's mission shall continue as long as there are young people in America with a dedication to academic excellence and a desire to serve their country and their communities.

William R. Hearst III

William Randolph Hearst III



MARCH 1–8, 2025

63rd Annual Washington Week Agenda

SATURDAY, MARCH 1

Arrival and Welcome Day

Taylor Oster (USSYP ND-2012)
United States Senate Youth
Alumni Association President

Bill Doherty
Co-Founder, Braver Angels

Welcome Remarks

Donna Kalajian Lagani
Co-Executive Director,
The Hearst Foundations

*Announcements and meeting
of Military Mentor Groups*

SUNDAY, MARCH 2

Tour of **GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT VERNON**

Visit to **THE SMITHSONIAN
AMERICAN ART MUSEUM**
The National Portrait Gallery

Formal introduction of Military Mentors
and program welcome by

Dino Dinovitz
Co-Executive Director,
The Hearst Foundations

MONDAY, MARCH 3

OPENING BREAKFAST

Brian Kamoie (USSYP PA-1989)
Managing Director,
Cyber & Strategic Risk, Deloitte
Former DHS Distinguished Chair of
Leadership, U.S. Naval Academy

Visit with **SENATE OFFICERS**

Jackie Barber
Secretary of the Senate

Elizabeth MacDonough
Senate Parliamentarian

Jennifer Hemingway
Sergeant at Arms

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS Luncheon

Dr. Carla Hayden
Librarian of Congress

Dr. Katherine Scott
Senate Historian

Visit to **THE SUPREME COURT**

Justice Brett Kavanaugh
Associate Justice of the
U.S. Supreme Court

OPENING DINNER

Senator Jeanne Shaheen
Democratic Co-Chair
63rd Annual
United States Senate Youth Program

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

Visit to **THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

Tour and private viewing of
THE FOUNDING CHARTERS

James Byron
Senior Advisor

Chris Naylor
Executive for Research Services

Visit to **THE STATE DEPARTMENT**

Benjamin Franklin State
Dining Room Luncheon

Marco Rubio
Secretary of State

Michele Exner
Senior Bureau Official
Global Public Affairs

Philip Laidlaw
Acting Senior Bureau Official
Legislative Affairs

**DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION
ROOMS TOUR**

Virginia Hart
Department of State Director
and Curator of the Diplomatic
Reception Rooms

MONUMENTS TOUR

The National Mall

**USSYP ANNUAL
AMBASSADOR DINNER**

George P. Schultz Great Hall
United States Institute of Peace

Ambassador George Moose
Acting President and CEO, USIP

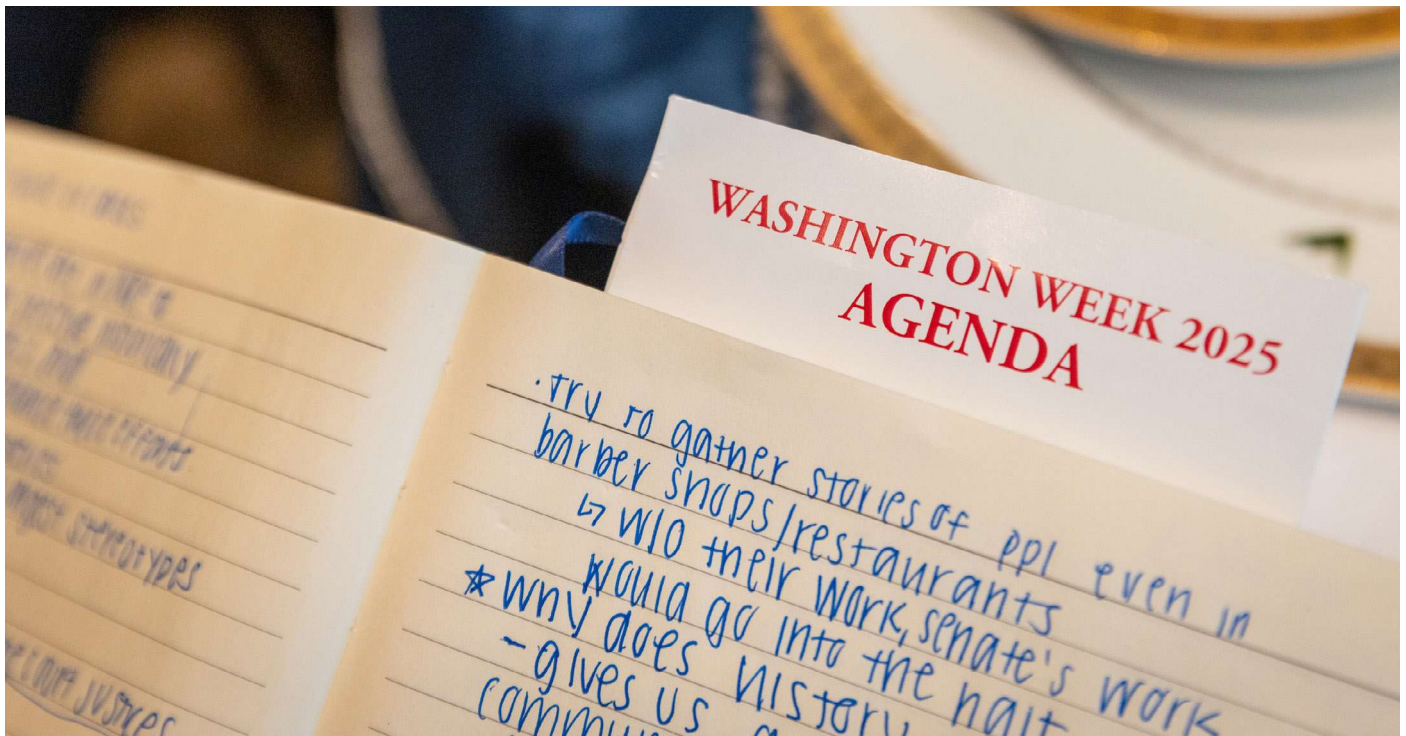
Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer
Ambassador and
Deputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of Mexico in the U.S.

**PRESIDENTIAL JOINT ADDRESS
VIEWING PARTY**

Mayflower Grand Ballroom



"Reading my notebook unravels memories of a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience. More than that, it is a life-defining experience, a point I know I will connect my future achievements back to." Ashley Billiter (KY-2025)



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

Visit to the **NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)**

NASA KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND SCIENTIFIC PANEL

Casey Swails

Deputy Associate Administrator,
NASA

Astronaut Crew of Expedition 71

Scientific Expert Panel

JOURNALISM LUNCHEON

Ryan Nobles

Chief Capitol Hill Correspondent,
NBC News

63rd ANNUAL SENATE RECEPTION

Senator Thom Tillis

of North Carolina

Senator Jeanne Shaheen

of New Hampshire

Co-Chairs of the 63rd Annual
United States Senate Youth Program

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

THE WHITE HOUSE

Tour of the Executive Mansion

SENATE PERSPECTIVE LUNCHEON

Hart Senate Office Building

Senator Amy Klobuchar

of Minnesota

Samia Staehle

Director, The Hearst Corporation

Great Granddaughter of
William Randolph Hearst

SENATE CO-CHAIR DINNER

Senator Thom Tillis

Republican Co-Chair

63rd Annual

United States Senate Youth Program

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

NONPROFIT BREAKFAST

Linda Roth

Chief Communications Officer,
World Central Kitchen

Visit to

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

THE TOMB OF THE
UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Wreath Laying Ceremony

Visit to **THE PENTAGON**

Pete Hegseth

Secretary of Defense

Sean Parnell

Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
for Public Affairs

SEAC Troy E. Black

Senior Enlisted Advisor to the
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

FAREWELL DINNER

Delegate Farewell Speeches, Flag
Folding Ceremony, Farewell Slideshow



“That bus ride from Reagan Airport was the start of a week that would change my life. It was the start of a week that would connect me to people that would change my entire point of view. It was the start of a week that would reassure my faith in the future of America.”

Landen Coursey (AR-2025)

The United States Senate Youth Alumni Association has forged and maintained ties with thousands of program alumni. In addition to ongoing activities throughout the year, alumni gather during Washington Week for the association’s annual dinner and board meeting.

Welcome to Washington!

“You can’t fight a person the same way once you know their heart.”

After traveling from across the nation and overseas, delegates gathered at local airports and train stations, greeting each other before heading to the historic Mayflower Hotel.

As they met in person for the first time, students were welcomed by their Military Mentors, USSYP alumni and staff. This year’s Arrival Day speakers included USSYP Alumni Association President Taylor Oster (USSYP ND-2012), and Braver Angels Co-Founder Bill Doherty.

Mr. Doherty kicked off USSYP Washington Week 2025 with a challenge to delegates: “How can we do better when we disagree with each other?”

Mr. Doherty told the student delegates that they’re living in a time when people are exposed to less political diversity in their day-to-day lives, resulting in lower tolerance for political differences. He also reminded them that people are not influenced by someone else strongly challenging their point of view.

After dinner, the delegates put that advice into action, during orientation and “Get to know you” sessions with their mentor groups. Those groups were led by 15 Military Mentors, competitively selected officers from each service branch and two Senior Mentors who assist with the overall execution of the program. All Military Mentors support and guide delegates through the exciting and demanding week.



Braver Angels Co-Founder Bill Doherty speaks to delegates on Arrival Day.



“We often get so bogged down trying to convince others that their style is wrong – even if it is – that we reduce space to engage in substance. Mr. Doherty’s remarks set the tone for the week and helped me engage in more meaningful discussions.” Kasim Khapra (VA-2025)



USSYAA President Taylor Oster welcomes the 2025 class to the USSYP.



REPUBLICAN CO-CHAIR

Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina

“In matters of facts, the facts matter. We must speak truth to our friends, regardless of where they are on the ideological spectrum.”

Republican Co-Chair Thom Tillis of North Carolina addressed the 2025 USSYP delegates with an openness and frankness about the important role the Senate plays in governing – and the growing need for bipartisanship.

He drew on his start as a PTA president and his road through the North Carolina House of Representatives before reaching the U.S. Senate – where pragmatism and compromise are needed for lawmakers to get things done. The Senator shared his personal philosophy with the delegates, saying, “I cannot say my general ideology has changed, but when new facts are presented, my opinion and my position can change.”

Senator Tillis also highlighted his own bipartisan efforts in areas such as energy and education and trying to bridge the divide, whether his party was in the minority or the majority. He told delegates that “Bipartisanship always requires somebody in the minority to have some courage and step out.” It is that need that makes the Senate “unique,” he added, calling the chamber exceptional “because of that higher standard.”

He also encouraged delegates to hold themselves to a higher standard – noting people, young and old, emulate the behavior of members of Congress, and even local officials, sharing, “We need to lead by example, and then we need people in the community like you to do the same.”

North Carolina delegate Sriya Vangala closed, saying, “Compromise is the past, the present and the future, and Senator Tillis has demonstrated this forward and direct approach to bipartisan solutions.”



(TOP LEFT) Senator Tillis shakes hands with North Carolina delegate Sriya Vangala;
(BOTTOM RIGHT) Senator Tillis shares a laugh with North Carolina delegate Fatou Lo.



“Senator Tillis, with refreshing candor, spoke about the human cost of hyperpartisanship. It was a sobering reminder that bridging divides isn’t optional. It’s the only way forward.”

Pranshu Krishna (MT-2025)



Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire



"I believe this is the greatest country in the world, and it's important for each of us to make a contribution to it."

Past, present and future. The opening Co-Chair Dinner incorporated all three with time-honored USSYP traditions.

The Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps and the Joint Armed Forces Color Guard infused the evening with our country's history. And Democratic Co-Chair Senator Jeanne Shaheen shared how a tumultuous time in U.S. history intersected with her own, relaying to delegates how she began her career in the 1960s in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam protests and the fight for women's rights. She drew direct lines from that time to the present for the student delegates, urging them to "think about how to make sure we get past this period in our nation's history and bring the country back together."

Senator Shaheen then gave them advice that would carry them not just through Washington Week, but through the rest of their lives in public service — to work to see other points of views and to be "willing to work with people who you may not agree with on nine out of ten things, but you find agreement on one thing, and you can move forward and try and get that done."

New Hampshire delegate William Brochu offered that Senator Shaheen's career as the first woman in U.S. history to be elected both Governor and U.S. Senator is a testament to the power of service-based leadership. "She reminds us the true measure of a leader is not just in the policies they pass, but in the lives they touch."

In true USSYP fashion, the delegates would end the evening with something everyone could agree on: the famous white chocolate Capitol Dome desserts.





“When I was listening to Senator Shaheen’s speech, I was incredibly inspired by how she used her personal experience to make key changes in government. Senator Shaheen reinforced in me the importance of bipartisanship. Small, incremental changes are better than none at all.”

Sarah Lange (NE-2025)



(TOP LEFT) Senator Shaheen with New Hampshire delegates William Brochu and Ryan Casey; (TOP RIGHT) Senator Shaheen congratulates delegates; (BOTTOM LEFT) The United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps performs for the delegates.



ALUMNI BREAKFAST

Brian Kamoie

(USSYP PA-1989)

“The people sitting at your tables are future senators and governors, even the president. You belong here.”

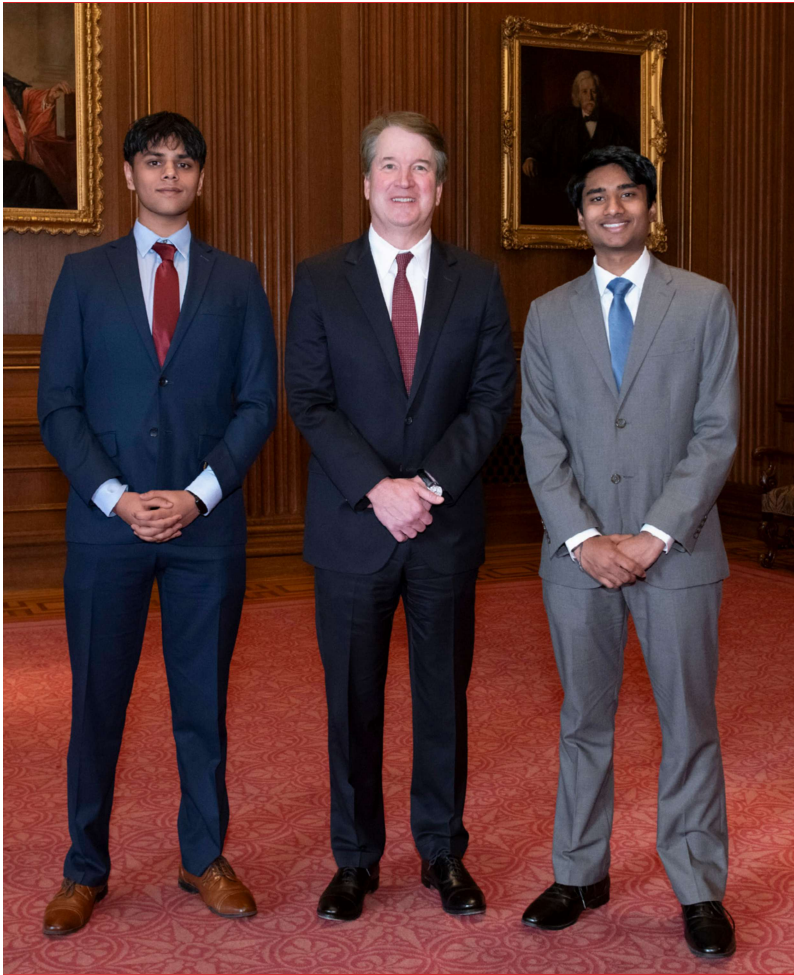
Senate Youth 2025 – what will you do with your wild and precious life? That’s how national and cybersecurity expert Brian Kamoie (USSYP PA-1989) set the stage for the student delegates as he shared how being a USSYP alumnus set him on a path of public service that led to the White House and beyond. The former senior advisor to President Barack Obama and former Chair of Leadership at the U.S. Naval Academy immediately connected with the delegates with his version of their ice-breaker game “Two Truths and a Lie” before sharing an important truth with them: They had earned and deserved their spot at Washington Week. He called his USSYP experience an important start for his career in public service, encouraging delegates to “commit to serve, think big and take bold and ethical action.” Mr. Kamoie assured students they will not regret their time in public service – adding, when they look back at what they accomplished, “You’ll be able to look yourself in the mirror with pride; you’ll be able to sleep well at night; you’ll be able to talk to your children and ultimately your grandchildren about how you made a difference.”



Mr. Kamoie with Pennsylvania delegates Anjali Verma and Elizabeth Shacklett.

“Brian Kamoie’s reminders to be bold, be ethical and commit to serve are ones I will hold on to as I look to become like the public servants that we heard from throughout the week.”

Miriam Tsegay (IL-2025)



Justice Kavanaugh meets with Maryland delegates Maneet Mehta and Charan Bala.



THE SUPREME COURT

Associate Justice Brett Kavanaugh

“Live on the sunrise side of the mountain.”

Anticipation and awe came over the delegates as they waited in the vaunted Great Hall of the Supreme Court. Once inside the courtroom, they learned the history of this “Temple of Justice,” whose ceilings are adorned with frescoes of lawgivers throughout the ages, where oral arguments are heard and life-altering decisions announced. Justice Brett Kavanaugh’s down-to-earth demeanor immediately put the group at ease. “We are here like umpires or referees,” said the self-professed basketball dad, “to be nonpartisan arbiters who protect individual rights even when a position is unpopular.” Respect for the Court’s decisions is based on respect for the process, he said, and all parties feeling that they have been fully and fairly heard. “Justices have to be well prepared and must be able to keep an open mind in learning both parties’ positions. You must be able to stand in someone else’s shoes.” Questioned about the intensity of the work, the Justice quoted former President George W. Bush: “Live on the sunrise side of the mountain – be optimistic and positive. Think more about the day that is coming than the one that has passed.” In his first appearance with the USSYP, Justice Kavanaugh took dozens of questions from the eager students and gave excellent college advice: “Get to know your teachers as mentors. Go to office hours! Be ultra prepared.” He pulled back the velvet curtain on the collegial relationships he has with his colleagues and revealed the profound impact of a life in the law.

“I even got to ask Justice Brett Kavanaugh a question, and he responded about the ‘courage to change your mind.’ That idea — being open-minded enough to shift your views — really stuck with me. In a world where standing your ground is often seen as strength, he reminded us that true leadership requires humility and growth.”

Sarah Gao (CA-2025)



SENATE OFFICERS

Jackie Barber, Elizabeth MacDonough and Jennifer Hemingway

“Your country needs your commitment to its enduring principles.”

Monday morning of Washington Week traditionally begins with a deep dive into the storied history of the United States Senate led by three Senate officers who manage the day-to-day operations of the greatest deliberative body behind the scenes. Jennifer Hemingway, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, shared that her career path to one of the highest Senate offices began with an intern position. The office of Secretary of the Senate, now led by Jackie Barber, began in 1789 with Samuel Otis managing the supply of parchment paper and quill pens. Elizabeth MacDonough, Senate Parliamentarian, described her role as an “apolitical umpire for the Senate, a neutral arbiter of all the rules and laws and decade upon decade of dusty precedent.” Seeing the youthful faces before her, Ms. MacDonough said she hoped delegates would “come away from this visit with a new or revised vision of what you want your educational focus or career path to be.” She encouraged them to view public service as noble and worthy – telling them, “Your country needs your commitment to its enduring principles, your perspective and your energy.”



“I saw the work that went into maintaining procedure and decorum in the Senate after hearing from Senate Parliamentarian Elizabeth MacDonough, Secretary of the Senate Jackie Barber and Sergeant at Arms Jennifer Hemingway. Despite the growing ideological divides in the legislative branch, all three were committed to interpreting Senate rules and procedures and applying them fairly to Senators.”

Nathan Kalhan (OH-2025)



(TOP) Secretary of the Senate Barber meets with South Dakota delegates Sheridan Voorhees and Champ Baumgarten; (MIDDLE) Senate Parliamentarian MacDonough discusses Senate decorum with delegates in the Russell Kennedy Caucus Room; (BOTTOM) Senate Sergeant at Arms Hemingway takes questions from delegates.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS LUNCHEON

Katherine Scott and Carla Hayden

“At the heart of our democracy is the practice of individuals coming together to express views and to take action.”

“History is important. Research, judgment of sources, validation of facts, awareness of biases: all essential for democracy. From Dr. Scott, I learned throughout our history, individuals have had incredible power to enact the kind of change they want to see in the world.”

Annamika Konkola (OR-2025)

Running through burning buildings to save historical records may sound like the stuff of a superhero story, but it’s just one of the little-known Senate stories Dr. Katherine Scott keeps alive in her role as Senate Historian. The story of Lewis Machen and his assistant Tobias Simpson rescuing all the records related to the Senate in 1814 is just one of thousands of stories Dr. Scott says have helped shape the Senate, the nation and the world. It’s part of what she calls her dream job – marrying her love of politics with her love of history and giving her a front-row seat to the history being made each day. Calling the delegates “her people,” Dr. Scott told them they are “bound together to public service, education and leadership” and that “history matters to people who are committed to public service, to education and leadership.”

Dr. Carla Hayden, the 14th Librarian of Congress and both the first African American and first woman to hold the post, shared how she helps make that history accessible to people all over the country. She reflected on her own journey, including being nominated by President Barack Obama, calling it the “ultimate job interview.” And she described how her background as a public librarian inspired her to find ways to “open up this treasure chest, the world’s largest library” and make it accessible to everyone. Dr. Hayden talked about the innovative ways her team is using pop culture to make those connections. The students were enraptured by her stories about Lizzo playing the historic flutes in the Library’s collection, and how original drawings of Captain America were recently used to showcase the Library’s collection of comic books – the largest in the world. But Dr. Hayden said the next generation of heroes were those sitting in the room – and she, and so many others, will be inspired by seeing who would be making their own history next.



(ABOVE) Dr. Scott beams as she listens to Washington delegate Ellie Xue’s remarks; (BELOW) Dr. Hayden tells delegates about her “ultimate job interview.”





DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary Marco Rubio

“If you can find what you’re good at and what you love, you’ve found your calling.”

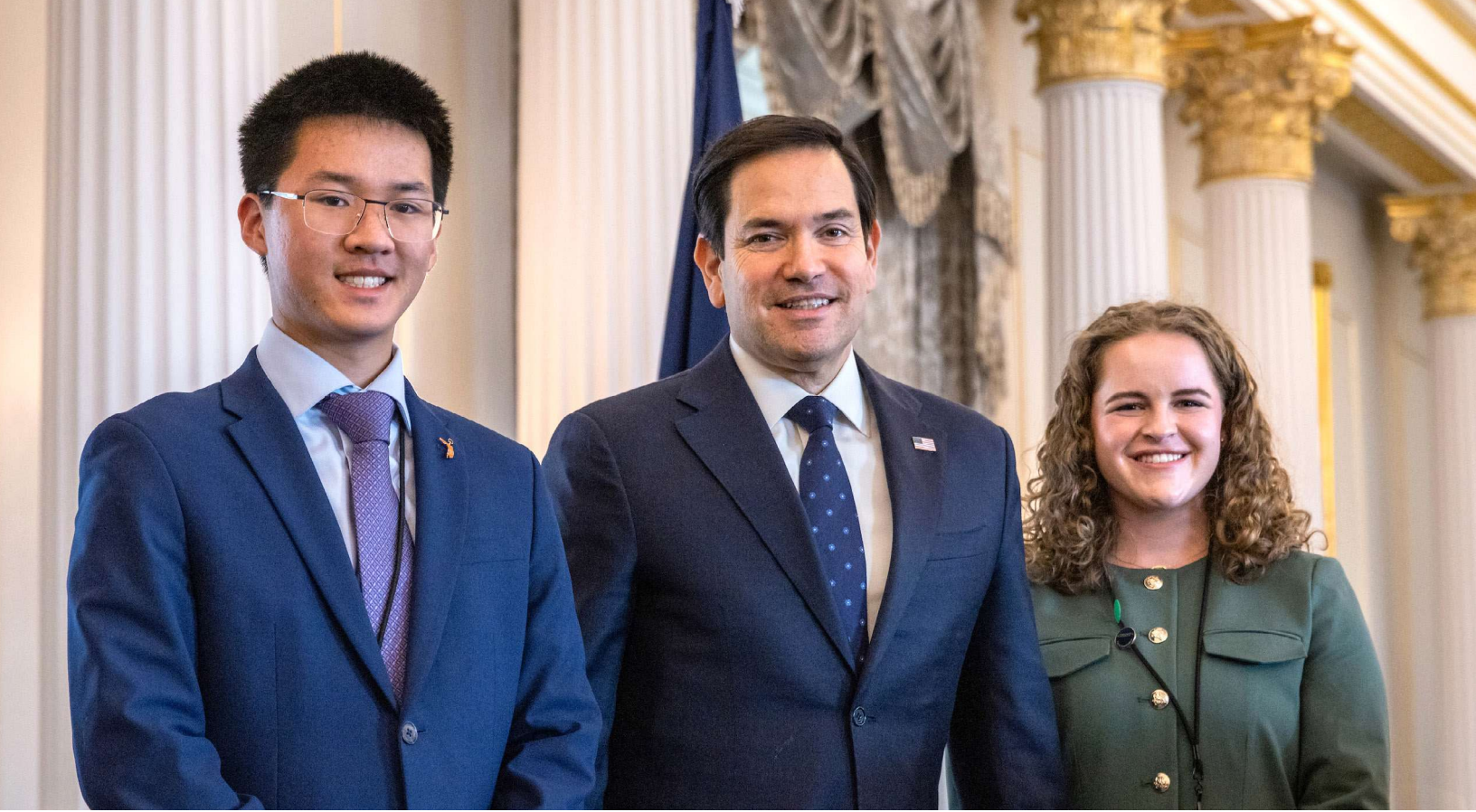
Delegates entered the gorgeously set Benjamin Franklin State Dining Room uncertain if international events would preclude the newly unanimously confirmed Secretary of State Marco Rubio from meeting with them. The former Senator did not disappoint. Enthusiastically giving his time and wisdom, Secretary Rubio took the podium and urged delegates to follow their passion: “You cannot be great at something you do not love to do,” he explained. “Your passions are going to drive you towards your mission.” Reflecting on a career in public service, he described “the adrenaline rush that comes from waking up in the morning knowing that something you do that day has a real impact on lives for the better; in the world, on the course of events in your country or on this planet.” He continued, “Public service makes a difference. It’s a way to look back at your years and decades and say, ‘My life mattered.’”

The State Department Bureaus of Global Public Affairs and Legislative Affairs served as hosts for the once-in-a-lifetime event. Michele Exner, of Global Public Affairs, urged delegates to “Find your reason, whether it’s faith or family or your community.” She gave the students concrete advice for success in their careers: “Never feel like you’re above any task. Treat every interaction as though it was an interview. Dress the part. Talk the part. Do your homework.”

Philip Laidlaw, of the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, inspired the students, saying, “The problems that we’re going to face down the road are not going to be solved by the previous generation. They are going to be solved by you, so it’s important to step up. Think about things in a global way.” Director and Curator Virginia Hart led the tour of the beautiful Diplomatic Reception Rooms with historic paintings, tableware and decorative arts, including the desk where the Treaty of Paris was signed. The day was an unforgettable experience of a lifetime for the students.



(TOP) Secretary Rubio delivers the Luncheon Keynote address to USSYP delegates; (MIDDLE) Ms. Exner shares her journey to the State Department with delegates; (BOTTOM) Mr. Laidlaw encouraged delegates about their future.



“Secretary of State Marco Rubio gave one speech I will never forget ... He inspired us to explore areas that ignite our passion and encouraged us to focus on our ‘why.’ When understanding our purpose, we discover our true path.”
Emma Cash (SC-2025)



(TOP) Secretary Rubio meets with Florida delegates Terry Shen and Ella York; (BOTTOM) State Department Curator Virginia Hart gives delegates a close-up view of historic treasures.



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The Founding Charters

Preserving the nation's history for all

A private tour of the nation's original founding charters, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, is a perfect way to start the day during Washington Week. And it's a perfect example of how the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration works to make the nation's history available to all its citizens as the agency responsible for preserving documents and recordings from all three branches of government. The Archives' Executive for Research Services Chris Naylor described the process to digitize the 13.5 billion pages in the Archives to make them accessible online. The effort to document decisions that affect the rights of American citizens is daunting – archivists are even using technology from NASA to reach this goal. The mission is simple yet profound – to help promote civic engagement and provide primary sources of information for anyone who seeks it.



"Going places where no teenagers go and meeting people that no teenagers meet — just incredible. Each encounter gave me a deeper appreciation for the complexity and inner workings of our federal government. These weren't just lectures — they were personal, thoughtful experiences that challenged us to think critically and understand a variety of perspectives."

Nicholai Galusha (WI-2025)



(LEFT) Mr. Naylor shares how archivists preserve the nation's history; (RIGHT) National Archives Senior Advisor James Byron meets with West Virginia delegate Louisa Pate and South Carolina Delegate Emma Cash.



“Time and time again, our speakers would mention the importance of seeing different perspectives and uniting for the common good of our country and the people. As Senator Klobuchar said, ‘Politics should be about improving people’s lives, not dividing them.’”

Hannah Cross (OK-2025)



SENATE PERSPECTIVE LUNCHEON

Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota

“Learn everything you can.”

Senator Amy Klobuchar, the first woman elected to represent the state of Minnesota in the U.S. Senate, had students on the edge of their seats at the luncheon in the Hart Senate Building as she described her first official job in Washington. As an intern for former Senator Walter Mondale, she crawled under desks to do a furniture inventory. Her second job in D.C.: Senator from Minnesota, the North Star state.

Her advice to students: “Take your first job seriously – even if it’s not really what you thought you were going to do. Just do what you’re given and do a good job.” The Senator urged her audience to learn everything they can and to meet people from other parts of the country who have other ideological beliefs. “It’s important to find common ground, but then sometimes you have to stand your ground.”

The former chairwoman of the Senate Rules Committee, known as a “heartland Democrat” with a strong bipartisan track record, Senator Klobuchar shared her basic philosophy: “What unites us is bigger than what divides us.” It’s that belief that she called her North Star and what guides her every day.



(MIDDLE LEFT) Senator Klobuchar greets students;
(BOTTOM LEFT) : Hearst Corporation Director Samia Staehle, great-granddaughter of William Randolph Hearst, relays her Washington Week experiences over the decades and congratulates the delegates.

**AMBASSADOR DINNER:
UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE**

Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer of Mexico

“This is one of the most complex and dynamic relationships in the world. We are not only neighbors, we are partners, and we are family. We are intertwined.”

As night fell outside the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), delegates enjoyed dinner under its distinctive roof – a structure designed to evoke the white dove of peace. Congress established USIP in 1984 to promote international peace and provide education, training and research to help resolve conflicts among nations.

The evening's speakers highlighted the importance of constructive dialogue, diplomacy and education to live up to that mission. Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer, Deputy Chief of Mission for the Embassy of Mexico, discussed the magnitude of the U.S. – Mexico relationship, including \$840 billion in annual trade in 2024, regional migration affecting both nations, border security and illicit gun and fentanyl crisis. She emphasized the need for mutual cooperation in areas that transcend borders – education, science, the environment and health – and noted that diplomatic dialogue strengthens the interests and protections for millions of lives in both countries. Earlier in the evening, USIP Acting President Ambassador George Moose shared more about his organization's mission to educate and train peace builders worldwide and to equip them with the tools and approaches to prevent, mitigate and resolve violent conflicts. But the efforts are not just abroad. Ambassador Moose told the group that the education for global peace building begins in their own communities – through schools, colleges, universities, community groups and civic and faith-based organizations.



“I hear once more the words of Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer as she earnestly discussed working in collaboration, not subordination, on the international stage and how immigration is a shared responsibility. Most of all, however, I remember the genuineness of that evening — the hope that was sparked within me.”

Isaac Vosburg (IA-2025)



(TOP) Ambassadors Moose and Fajer meet New Mexico delegates Aarush Tutiki and Uxue Sansinena; (BOTTOM) Ambassador Moose speaks to delegates about the importance of the USIP mission at home and around the world.



“Though a leader, Ambassador Moose had a calming presence that focused on humility. His dedication to connecting humanly with others — alike and opposite — encouraged me to seek a leadership style rooted in empathy, where understanding and unity hold more power than authority alone.”

Sophie Lu (TN-2025)



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Casey Swails, Shawn Domagal-Goldman and the Expedition 71 Astronauts

“What career interests you enough to do that instead of sleeping?”

The trip to NASA headquarters may have started on a bus, but it quickly led the delegates to places they'd only dreamed about. They soon immersed themselves in the activities of one of America's most awe-inspiring agencies. The morning began with an interview with NASA's Deputy Associate Administrator Casey Swails, who shared the agency's broad range of priorities, from human wellness and planetary health to aeronautics and science. The delegates then had the out-of-this-world experience of meeting the Expedition 71 astronauts, who had returned in late 2024 from the International Space Station. The astronauts shared highlights of their experience, such as collaborating with other astronauts from around the globe and their research projects. They even played a video of their own ISS Olympics to commemorate the Paris 2024 summer games. They generously answered questions, explaining the arduous process of readjusting to life with gravity and observing human impacts on Earth from afar, such as desertification and the proliferation of satellites. One astronaut, when asked about the courage it takes to launch oneself into the unknown, responded: “It is fear having said its prayers.” The delegates also participated in a NASA Science panel, learning about a number of NASA projects conducted from Earth, the applications of AI and big data in NASA's projects. The group also received career advice from scientist Shawn Domagal-Goldman, who told delegates to “Ask yourselves: What career interests you enough to do that instead of sleeping? If you can answer that question, that is your job!” For Dr. Domagal-Goldman, the answer was astrobiology.



(TOP) Ms. Swails speaks to starstruck delegates; (MIDDLE) California delegate Sarah Gao and Indiana delegate Sophia Fu introduce the Expedition 71 astronauts; (BOTTOM) Expedition 71 astronaut Matthew Dominick shares a lighthearted moment with the USSYP 2025 Military Mentor team.



“I met real-life astronauts from Expedition 71 at NASA headquarters, including my hero Dr. Mike Barratt, an internal medicine physician who studied the effects of space on the human body. For someone like me, who dreams of a career at the intersection of medicine, research and policy, it was the most inspiring encounter imaginable.”

Charlie Snellman (MT-2025)





Mr. Nobles with delegate journalism panelists Emily Wheeler (DoDEA), Sriya Tallapragada (NJ) and Alex Seojoon Kim (OK).

JOURNALISM LUNCHEON

Ryan Nobles, NBC News

“The number one thing that you have at your disposal is the truth.”

During Washington Week’s Journalism Luncheon, NBC Chief Capitol Hill Correspondent Ryan Nobles was in an unusual position – not asking questions, but answering them from the student journalism panelists.

Emily Wheeler (DoDEA), Alex Seojoon Kim (OK) and Sriya Tallapragada (NJ) helped lead a discussion on covering politics, pressures on journalists and broader challenges to the First Amendment.

Mr. Nobles relayed experiences from early in his career and explained how they shaped him as a reporter. He talked about working nights, weekends and holidays — whatever it took to cover the news that impacted the communities on his beat. He said he learned early how to be “respectful and professional, while at the same time not betraying the responsibility” to tell the story accurately. Mr. Nobles also acknowledged the difficulties of being a Washington correspondent in times of political division and strongly defended the importance of the First Amendment, saying, “This goes for a Republican administration and a Democratic administration: Any time access and freedom of the press is threatened, that is the first step towards the threatening of our democracy.”



“Nobles’ message was a reminder that telling the truth isn’t just about being accurate; it’s about building trust, credibility and real change.”

Landon Resendes (RI-2025)



NONPROFIT BREAKFAST: WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN

Linda Roth

“It’s not just about the food. It’s about dignity. It’s about feeling at home.”

World Central Kitchen’s Chief Communications Officer Linda Roth has traveled the world to bring a taste of home to disaster-ravaged communities. It’s part of the work started by renowned chef José Andrés, who first used his culinary skills to help in Haiti after a devastating earthquake in 2010. Since then, World Central Kitchen has served up more than 450 million meals in 50 countries, and World Central Kitchen teams are among the first on the front lines in humanitarian, climate and community crises, to prepare fresh food for people.

Ms. Roth captivated delegates as she shared pictures of herself and her colleagues in places like Ukraine, Gaza and Pakistan and close to home in North Carolina and California. And she described in detail how World Central Kitchen gets aid to places, whether it was by boat, helicopter, snowmobiles or even a herd of donkeys. Ms. Roth described the mission simply: “Food is a universal right” and World Central Kitchen will go where they’re needed, to help provide food to those who have lost everything. Those efforts, Ms. Roth says, help create a place of joy and a sense of home in the communities World Central Kitchen serves.



Ms. Roth meets with Massachusetts delegates Evan Cote and Betty Nguyen.



“Her quote rang especially true for my home: ‘When things look the darkest, the best of the world shows up.’ I thought about the individuals who took time out of their lives to help others in a community that had been in need following the disaster. Her message echoed the idea that the time to act is ‘not tomorrow, not next week, but today. We must strive every day to help others, build each other up and never forget to serve our communities.’” Joshua Copley (WV-2025)



Honors From Their Senators









2025 Senate Reception Attendees



Alabama

Tommy Tuberville with
Gavin Hewston and Jeeah Kim



Katie Britt with
Jeeah Kim and Gavin Hewston



Alaska

Lisa Murkowski with
Joshua Pak and Adalgisa Reigh



Arkansas

John Boozman with
Landen Coursey and
Prerana Kodakandla



Arkansas

Tom Cotton with
Landen Coursey and
Prerana Kodakandla



Colorado

Michael F. Bennet with
Emily Wheeler, Jack Clawson
and Devin Klock



John Hickenlooper with
Emily Wheeler, Jack Clawson
and Devin Klock



Connecticut

Richard Blumenthal with
Sreenidi Bala and Grace Ackerman



Delaware

Christopher A. Coons with
Gabriella Charles and Arianna Li



Lisa Blunt Rochester with
Gabriella Charles and Arianna Li



Florida

Ashley Moody with
Terry Shen, Ella York
and Alliyah Regala



Georgia

Jon Ossoff with
Jaylin Hillsman and
Vivian Reyes-Martinez



Georgia

Raphael Warnock with
Jaylin Hillsman and
Vivian Reyes-Martinez



Hawaii

Brian Schatz with
Ethan Yang and Wilson Chau



Mazie K. Hirono with
Ethan Yang and Wilson Chau



Idaho

James E. Risch with
Adilee Elam and Jeni Hammon



Indiana

Todd Young with
Calleigh Neal and Sophia Fu



Iowa

Charles Grassley with
Isaac Vosburg and Thanvee Paga



Joni K. Ernst with
Thanvee Paga and Isaac Vosburg



Kansas

Jerry Moran with
Erin Tims and Sophia Hsu



Kentucky

Mitch McConnell with
Ashley Billiter and Peter Jefferson



Rand Paul with
Ashley Billiter and Peter Jefferson



Louisiana

Bill Cassidy with
Neal Tandon and Emily Nevils



John N. Kennedy with
Neal Tandon and Emily Nevils

2025 Senate Reception Attendees



Maine

Susan M. Collins with
Emmett Appel and Sam Drummey



Angus S. King with
Emmett Appel and Sam Drummey



Massachusetts

Elizabeth Warren with
Evan Cote and Betty Nguyen



Edward J. Markey with
Evan Cote and Betty Nguyen



Michigan

Gary C. Peters with
Tasnim Basha and Paarth Sharma



Elissa Slotkin with
Tasnim Basha and Paarth Sharma



Minnesota

Amy Klobuchar with
Emily Ren and Pranika Kumar



Tina Smith with
Emily Ren and Pranika Kumar



Mississippi

Roger F. Wicker with
Jackson Pearce and
Shayleen Moeini



Cindy Hyde-Smith with
Jackson Pearce and
Shayleen Moeini



Montana

Steve Daines and Tim Sheehy
with Pranshu Krishna and
Charles Snellman



Nebraska

Pete Ricketts with
Sarah Lange and Anneliese Barga



Nevada

Catherine Cortez Masto with
Christopher Lee and Sebastian Rios



Jacky Rosen with
Christopher Lee and Sebastian Rios



New Hampshire

Jeanne Shaheen with
William Brochu and Ryan Casey



Maggie Hassan with
William Brochu and Ryan Casey



New Jersey

Cory A. Booker with
Sriya Tallapragada and
Aaralyn Camp



New Mexico

Ben Ray Luján with
Uxue Sansinena and Aarush Tutiki



North Carolina

Thom Tillis with
Fatou Lo and Sriya Vangala



Ted Budd with
Fatou Lo and Sriya Vangala



North Dakota

John Hoeven with
Martin Bergstedt and Cady Wang



Kevin Cramer with
Cady Wang and Martin Bergstedt



Ohio

Bernie Moreno with
Bishishta Acharya and
Nathan Kalhan



Oklahoma

James Lankford with
Alex Seojoon Kim and
Hannah Cross

2025 Senate Reception Attendees



Oregon

Ron Wyden with
Annamika Konkola and Katie Jin



Jeff Merkley with
Annamika Konkola and Katie Jin



Pennsylvania

John Fetterman with
Elizabeth Shacklett and
Anjali Verma



Dave McCormick with
Anjali Verma and Elizabeth Shacklett



Rhode Island

Jack Reed with
Landon Resendes and
Ashley Murphy



South Carolina

Lindsey Graham with
Emma Cash



Lindsey Graham with
Carson Colmer



South Dakota

John Thune with
Sheridan Voorhees and
Champ Baumgarten



South Dakota

Mike Rounds with
Champ Baumgarten and
Sheridan Voorhees



Tennessee

Marsha Blackburn with
Shuyu Sophie Lu and
Oluwaseyi Amosun



Bill Hagerty with
Shuyu Sophie Lu and
Oluwaseyi Amosun



Texas

John Cornyn with
Maribel Garza and Connor Gandy



Utah

Mike Lee with
Aingealeah Ford and Aaboli Samant



John R. Curtis with
Aingealeah Ford and Aaboli Samant



Vermont

Bernard Sanders with
Grey Fearon and Ellie Neckers



Peter Welch with
Grey Fearon and Ellie Neckers



Virginia

Tim Kaine with
Catherine Page and Kasim Khapra



Washington

Maria Cantwell with
Ashlye Triebs and Ellie Xue



West Virginia

Shelley Moore Capito with
Louisa Pate and Joshua Copley



Wisconsin

Ron Johnson with
Isabella Dereszkiewicz-Hodowany
and Nicholai Galusha



Tammy Baldwin with
Isabella Dereszkiewicz-Hodowany
and Nicholai Galusha



Wyoming

John Barrasso with
Deanna Davis and Henry Phillips

“During a conversation
with one of my
Senators, one truth
became abundantly
clear: there is no
higher calling than
public service. While
I may not know
exactly what my future
holds, I arrived at the
Mayflower after that
meeting more certain
than ever that I want
to dedicate my life to
serving others.”

Jack Clawson (CO-2025)

“Perhaps the most
profound impact of
this experience was
realizing that my voice
— and the voices of
youth — truly matter.”

Betty Nguyen (MA-2025)



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Secretary Pete Hegseth

“Serve your school and your community. Serve at all levels. We need that kind of service now.”

In the fast-moving pace of events inside the Washington Beltway, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had just been summoned to the White House. But he made a point to meet the Senate Youth Program delegates on the way out. Speaking without notes, and fielding many questions, his dialogue made for a memorable afternoon on Washington Week’s final day. “America is a beautiful experiment of shared values,” he began, as he urged delegates to “recognize the goodness in front of you.” He lauded the principle of public service, saying it was not always necessary to “want to serve this huge objective,” but to incorporate service “at all levels, including doing things that will never be in the headlines.”

Sean Parnell, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, shared inspiring advice with the young audience. “You will be presented with a lot of opportunities, and you probably have a plan,” he said, “but allow life to surprise you. You are going to find the right path, and the torch will be passed to you.” He predicted, “You will be world-changers.”

Without a microphone, but with a booming voice that could be heard down the long Pentagon hallway, SEAC Troy Black, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, left no doubt that he was counting on USSYP delegates to step up. “If not you, then who?” he asked. “And if it’s not you, then don’t complain too much.” Asking delegates to stand and raise their right hand, he repeated the oath that service members swear upon entering the Armed Forces. Patriotism, accountability, loyalty, integrity and commitment to service were embedded in his words and demeanor. The collective efforts of each citizen to preserve the nation are all important, he explained, looking at the stage behind him. “This flag is greater than any individual.”



(TOP) Mr. Parnell speaks to delegates and Military Mentors; (MIDDLE) Secretary Hegseth meets with South Carolina delegate Carson Colmer; (BOTTOM) Secretary Hegseth meets with DoDEA delegates Alliyah Regala and Emily Wheeler.



“Listening to these leaders and understanding how they approach their roles invoked a deeper level of respect for them and for the work they do. At the Pentagon, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth stated, ‘Our nation aims to form a more perfect union in an imperfect world. The U.S. will never be perfect, because humans are not perfect.’ We learned from him that perfection is not the point; progress is.”

Elizabeth Shacklett (PA-2025)



(TOP) Secretary Hegseth poses with USSYP 2025 Military Mentors; (RIGHT) SEAC Sergeant Major Troy Black caps a memorable afternoon for the delegates and Military Mentors.



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Major Elisabeth Hallgren, USA; Lieutenant Esther Kangas, USN; Lieutenant George Denove, USN; Lieutenant Commander Mark Leahy, USCG; Major Kevin Spencer, USA; Major Catherine Grizzle, USA; Lieutenant Commander Vikram Kanth, USN; Lieutenant Colonel Britney Hensley, ANG; Lieutenant Carlie Gilligan, USCG; Lieutenant Kathryn Rubio, USCG; Captain Justin Bean, USMC; Captain Tasia Reed, USSF; Major Jacqueline Barnum, USMC; 1st Lieutenant Katrina Joiner, USAF; Major Gregory Griffith, USA; Lieutenant Commander Natasha Niemann, USN; Captain Genevieve Heaps, USMC



The Outstanding 2025 Military Mentor Team

Competitively selected military officers designated by the Office of the Secretary of Defense were led by Senior Military Officer Major Catherine Grizzle, USA and Assistant Senior Military Officer Lieutenant Kathryn Rubio, USCG.



“Then there were the Military Mentors. Their dedication went beyond their uniforms; it was a commitment to shaping the leaders of tomorrow. With every word of advice, every shared story, they invested in the future of this country, planting seeds of leadership and resilience within us.”

Thanvee Paga, (IA-2025)



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Secretary Rubio left us with a message that resonated with me: ‘Once you find something you’re good at and love—you’ve found your calling.’ That moment made me pause. I thought about the generations who came before me—my ancestors, my parents—who sacrificed so much, faced countless challenges, yet never stopped dreaming.”

Vivian Reyes-Martinez (GA-2025)

“The moment I stood at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, I felt the weight of history, sacrifice and service settle into my core. It was a reflection of what public service truly means: to serve not for recognition, but because others before you gave everything without asking for any.”

Catherine Page (VA-2025)

“A quote from Sergeant Major Black affirmed for me a truth that I believe is as alive and relevant as our nation’s history: ‘If not you, then who? And if not you, don’t complain much.’ America’s success in becoming a ‘more perfect union’ in an imperfect world and the longevity of our nation are incumbent on us.”

Joshua Pak (AK-2025)

“One of the best quotes of the week came from Bill Doherty from Braver Angels, who told us, ‘You can’t fight a person the same once you know their heart.’”

Bode Gower (CA-2025)

“Senator Amy Klobuchar reminded me that there were still individuals who exemplified bipartisanship and were working towards the good, not the perfect.”

Katie Jin (OR-2025)

“As Dr. Carla Hayden, the first African American and first woman to serve as Librarian of Congress, put it, ‘When you are the first, you never want to be the last. Create a legacy.’ I wish that my life only serves to continue the legacy of leadership in my community.”

Shayleen Moeini (MS-2025)

“Brian Kamoie helped the feeling of imposter syndrome vanish. He said to us, ‘Know this, that you belong here.’ This message resonated with me because I felt as if he was not just talking about Washington Week, but anywhere I might go in life.”

Gavin Hewston (AL-2025)

“Ryan Nobles, Chief Capitol Hill Correspondent for NBC News, said, ‘The number one thing you have at your disposal is the truth.’ That line landed hard. In a time when facts are often debated, distorted or dismissed altogether, the role of truth in journalism, and in leadership, has never felt more urgent.”

Landon Resendes (RI-2025)

“Justice Brett Kavanaugh didn’t walk into the Supreme Court chamber with black robes of unreachable authority; he walked in as a father, a sports fan, a man who told us to ‘live on the sunrise side of the mountain’ while holding his high school teacher dear to his heart, and reminded us that everyone, no matter how high the office, is just a person doing their job.”

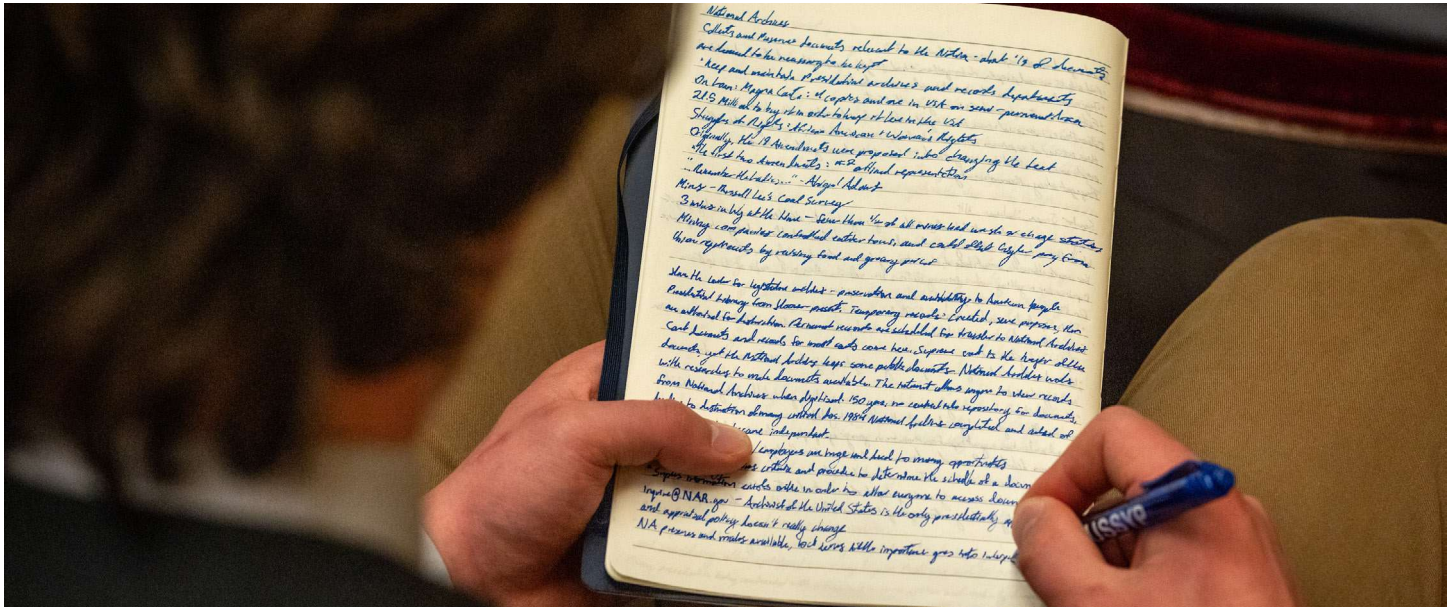
Cady Wang (ND-2025)

“At Mount Vernon, the Senior Director of Interpretation Jeremy Ray demonstrated to us George Washington was a true servant leader. He led not from control, but from genuine relationships. This fittingly revolutionary style for the time inspired the Continental Army — and later the whole nation — to take action for the better, securing the blessings of liberty for future generations.”

Jackson Pearce (MS-2025)

“We peered beyond the politicians and changemakers on Earth, turning our gaze skyward towards those brave enough to chase the stars: the trailblazing NASA astronauts from Expedition 71. ‘Courage is fear after saying your prayers’ was a mantra from astronaut Tracy C. Dyson that perfectly captured the idea that progress, rather than being born from comfort, is instead created from our willingness to dream big, take risks and challenge convention.”

Ellie Xue (WA-2025)



"In real life, we forget that there is often not a 'right' or 'wrong' side. If Jeanne Shaheen, Amy Klobuchar and Thom Tillis taught me anything as some of the most bipartisan Senators, it's when we know the other side's heart, we have to fight differently, and most importantly, we have to go TOGETHER."

Sophia Hsu (KS-2025)

"Knowing that there are genuinely good, selfless and brilliant people like our Military Mentors serving this country was the greatest lesson I took from USSYP. It is unimaginable not to feel the pulse of patriotism in your heart when you look into their faces and see the passion behind it. It is impossible not to trust our institutions when you see the stories and humanity behind them."

Emily Ren (MN-2025)

"Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina shared how his journey began with advocacy to his city government about building a recreational bike path in his community. These examples and others proved to me that we all have the capacity to become active citizens, regardless of background or where we start our journey."

Sebastian Rios (NV-2025)

"The USSYP offers an engaging, intelligent jump into the conversation of politics, not at a topical level, but at the level required to have a new understanding of what the world of politics needs. I was inspired by the program to contribute everything I can, and to be a civil servant in whatever area of study I continue on to."

Henry Phillips (WY-2025)

"Ambassador Ana Luisa Fajer's ability to acknowledge the uncertainty of our world's current state and employ it to, in turn, empower us to prioritize people and situations over politics and strategy was truly commendable."

Mahika Gudipati (MO-2025)

"Washington Week taught me that we need to be greater than our differences."

Pierce Lilly (DC-2025)

"The pure acts of selflessness by World Central Kitchen have shown me the value of commitment and civic-mindedness."

Zahra Dinkins (DC-2025)

"Perhaps the most humbling aspect of Washington Week was the humanization of politics."

Grace Ackerman (CT-2025)



FAREWELL DINNER

Lighting the Way Forward

The Farewell Dinner capped a week filled with remarkable moments from the nation's highest leaders, dignitaries and others in public service – with closing remarks given by two speakers chosen by the student delegates.

Terry Shen of Florida and Anjali Verma of Pennsylvania highlighted the ways that the experiences of Washington Week will guide the USSYP class of 2025 through their lives.

Mr. Shen spoke about how the week taught him the ultimate life lessons: How to serve others, how to be a good person and how to pursue happiness and fulfillment in life. Ms. Verma led the group in a way that helped shine a light on their roles as future leaders, community changemakers and visionaries.

The week's formal activities were closed with a solemn flag-folding ceremony conducted by the dedicated 2025 Military Mentor team and the Presentation of Colors by the Joint Armed Forces Color Guard.



Pennsylvania delegate Anjali Verma offers Farewell Night remarks to the USSYP 2025 class.

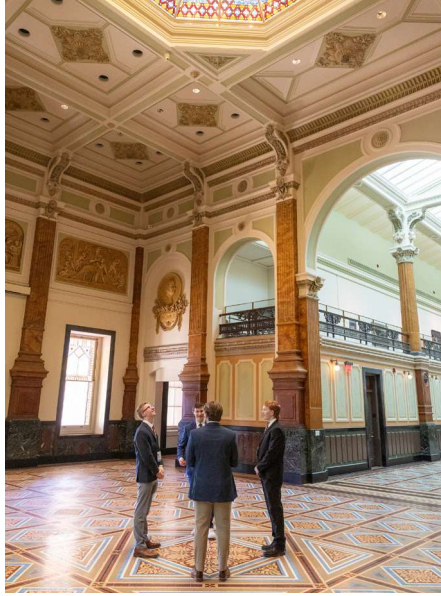


(LEFT) Florida delegate Terry Shen gives his Washington Week 2025 farewell remarks.



The emotional evening included numerous tributes to Rayne Guilford, who concluded her 18th, and final, Washington Week as program director. During her tenure, nearly 2,000 delegates attended Washington Week. Their dedication to public service is her ongoing legacy.





Historical Sites



“Through every pledge or celebration of America, I will forever remember my experiences in Washington, D.C., while showing my genuine gratitude toward our nation’s freedoms.”

Emily Nevils (LA-2025)





2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

ALABAMA



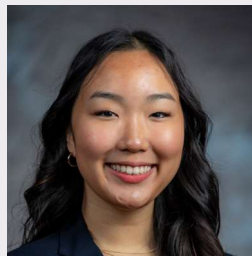
**Senator
Tommy Tuberville**



**Senator
Katie Britt**

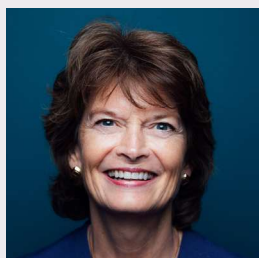


Gavin Hewston
John T. Morgan
Academy

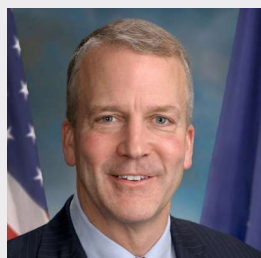


Jeeah Kim
Alabama School of
Math and Science

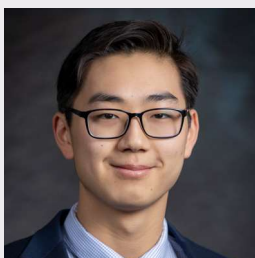
ALASKA



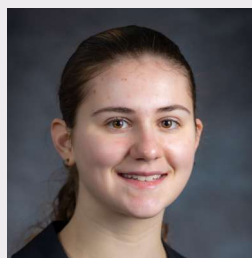
**Senator
Lisa Murkowski**



**Senator
Daniel Sullivan**



Joshua Pak
Polaris K-12 School



Adalgisa Reigh
Dillingham
High School

ARIZONA



**Senator
Mark Kelly**



**Senator
Ruben Gallego**



Sophia Lin
BASIS Scottsdale

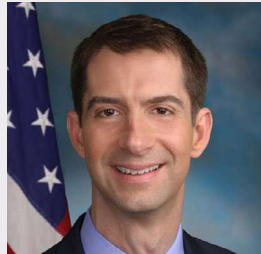


Cameron Mirmelli
BASIS Scottsdale

ARKANSAS



**Senator
John Boozman**



**Senator
Tom Cotton**



Landen Coursey
Alma
High School



Prerana Kodakandla
Bentonville
High School

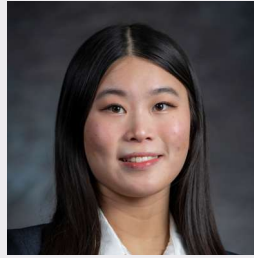
CALIFORNIA



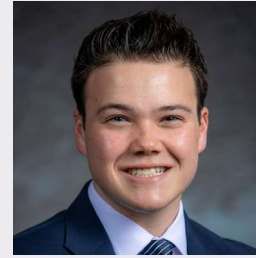
**Senator
Alex Padilla**



**Senator
Adam Schiff**



Sarah Gao
Canyon Crest
Academy



Bode Gower
Ukiah
High School

COLORADO



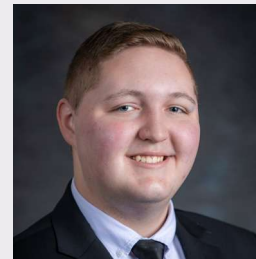
**Senator
Michael F. Bennet**



**Senator
John Hickenlooper**



Jack Clawson
Pine Creek
High School



Devin Klock
Pueblo East
High School

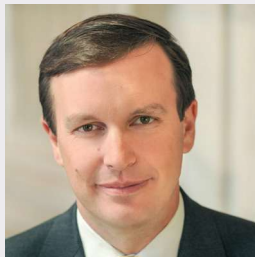


Emily Wheeler
Stuttgart High School
DoDEA - Germany

CONNECTICUT



**Senator
Richard Blumenthal**



**Senator
Christopher Murphy**

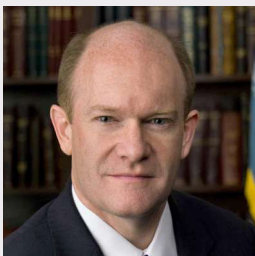


Grace Ackerman
Daniel Hand
High School



Sreenidi Bala
Farmington
High School

DELAWARE



**Senator
Christopher A.
Coons**



**Senator
Lisa Blunt
Rochester**



Gabriella Charles
Smyrna
High School



Arianna Li
Charter School
of Wilmington

2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



**Representative
Eleanor Holmes
Norton**

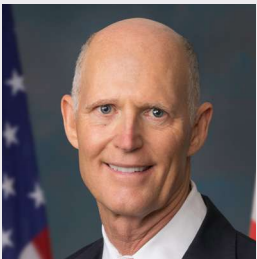


Zahra Dinkins
The School
Without Walls



Pierce Lilly
District of Columbia
International School

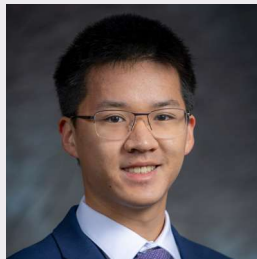
FLORIDA



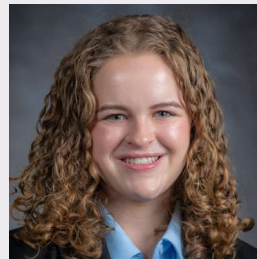
**Senator
Rick Scott**



**Senator
Ashley Moody**



Terry Shen
Pine View School



Ella York
Ponte Vedra
High School



Alliyah Regala
E. J. King High School
DoDEA - Japan

GEORGIA



**Senator
Jon Ossoff**



**Senator
Raphael Warnock**



Jaylin Hillsman
A.R. Johnson
Health Science and
Engineering Magnet
High School



**Vivian Reyes-
Martinez**
Adairsville
High School

HAWAII



**Senator
Brian Schatz**



**Senator
Mazie K. Hirono**



Wilson Chau
Maui
High School

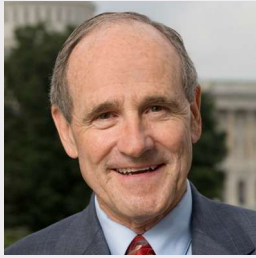


Ethan Yang
Henry J. Kaiser
High School

IDAHO



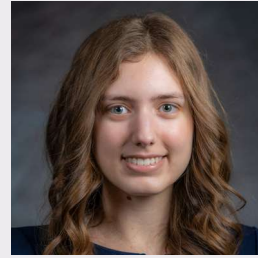
**Senator
Mike Crapo**



**Senator
James E. Risch**



Adilee Elam
Fruitland
High School



Jeni Hammon
Emmett
High School

ILLINOIS



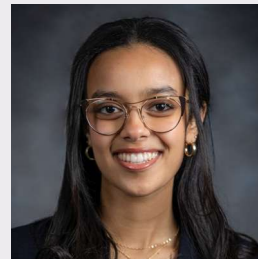
**Senator
Richard J. Durbin**



**Senator
Tammy Duckworth**



Shreya Nallamothe
University
High School



Miriam Tsegay
Bolingbrook
High School

INDIANA



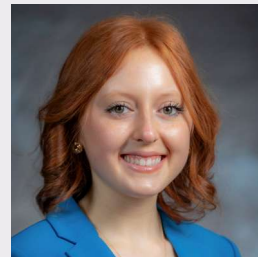
**Senator
Todd Young**



**Senator
Jim Banks**

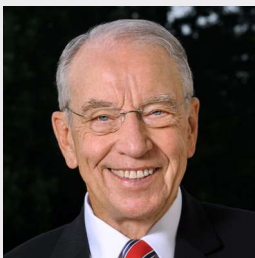


Sophia Fu
Carmel
High School



Calleigh Neal
Avon
High School

IOWA



**Senator
Charles Grassley**



**Senator
Joni K. Ernst**



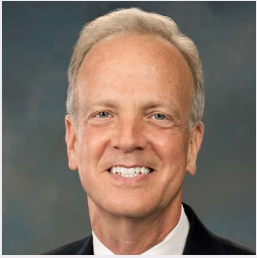
Thanvee Paga
Kennedy
High School



Isaac Vosburg
Hampton-Dumont
High School

2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

KANSAS



**Senator
Jerry Moran**



**Senator
Roger Marshall**



Sophia Hsu
Mill Valley
High School



Erin Tims
Larned
High School

KENTUCKY



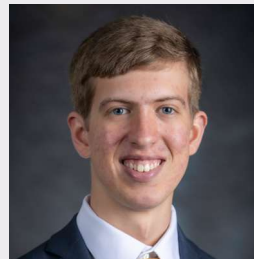
**Senator
Mitch McConnell**



**Senator
Rand Paul**



Ashley Billiter
duPont Manual
High School



Peter Jefferson
Henry Clay
High School

LOUISIANA



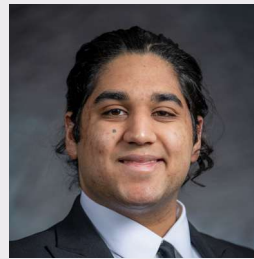
**Senator
Bill Cassidy**



**Senator
John N. Kennedy**



Emily Nevils
Winnfield
High School

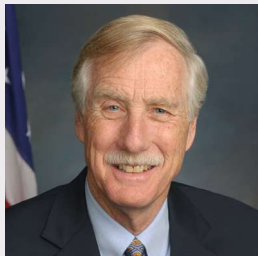


Neal Tandon
Haynes Academy
School for
Advanced Studies

MAINE



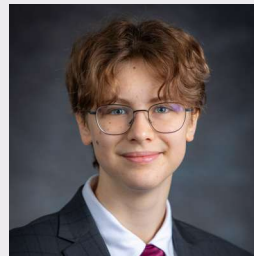
**Senator
Susan M. Collins**



**Senator
Angus S. King**



Emmett Appel
Erskine Academy



Sam Drummey
Thorton Academy



2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

MARYLAND



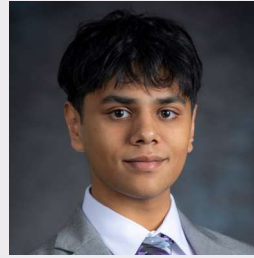
**Senator
Chris Van Hollen**



**Senator
Angela Alsobrooks**



Charan Bala
River Hill
High School

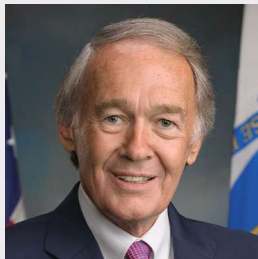


Maneet Mehta
Reservoir
High School

MASSACHUSETTS



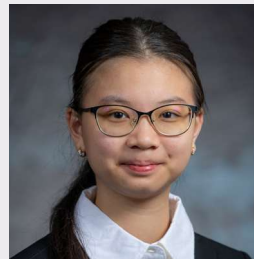
**Senator
Elizabeth Warren**



**Senator
Edward J. Markey**



Evan Cote
Tyngsborough
High School



Betty Nguyen
Boston Latin
Academy

MICHIGAN



**Senator
Gary Peters**



**Senator
Elissa Slotkin**



Tasnim Basha
International
Academy Okma



Paarth Sharma
Portage Central
High School

MINNESOTA



**Senator
Amy Klobuchar**



**Senator
Tina Smith**



Pranika Kumar
Edina
High School



Emily Ren
Mounds View
High School

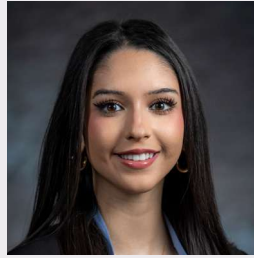
MISSISSIPPI



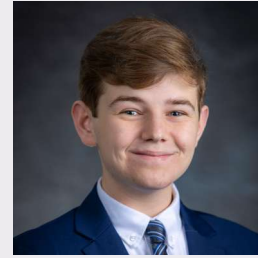
**Senator
Roger F. Wicker**



**Senator
Cindy Hyde-Smith**



Shayleen Moeini
St. Patrick Catholic
High School



Jackson Pearce
Gulfport
High School

MISSOURI



**Senator
Josh Hawley**



**Senator
Eric Schmitt**



Mahika Gudipati
Parkway West
High School



Jaelyn Woodley
Park Hills South
High School

MONTANA



**Senator
Steve Daines**



**Senator
Tim Sheehy**



Pranshu Krishna
Gallatin
High School



Charles Snellman
Capital
High School

NEBRASKA



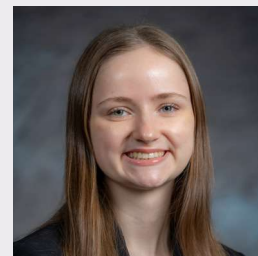
**Senator
Deb Fischer**



**Senator
Pete Ricketts**



Anneliese Barga
Norris
High School



Sarah Lange
Raymond Central
High School



NEVADA



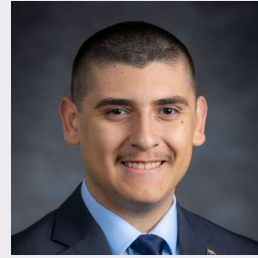
**Senator
Catherine
Cortez Masto**



**Senator
Jacky Rosen**

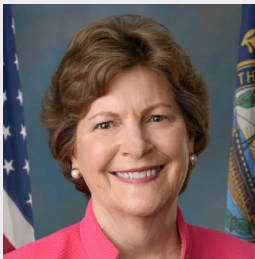


Christopher Lee
Bishop Gorman
High School



Sebastian Rios
Leadership Academy
of Nevada

NEW HAMPSHIRE



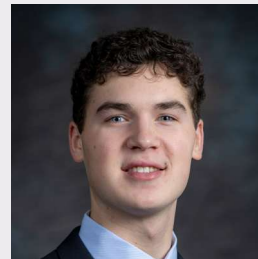
**Senator
Jeanne Shaheen**



**Senator
Maggie Hassan**



William Brochu
Brewster Academy



Ryan Casey
Bishop Brady
High School

NEW JERSEY



**Senator
Cory A. Booker**



**Senator
Andy Kim**



Aaralyn Camp
Cherry Hill
High School East



Sriya Tallapragada
The Pingry School

NEW MEXICO



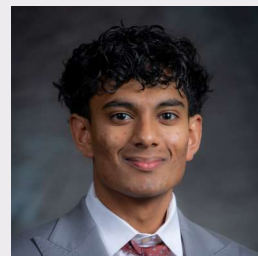
**Senator
Martin Heinrich**



**Senator
Ben Ray Luján**



Uxue Sansinena
Los Alamos
High School



Aarush Tutiki
Albuquerque
Academy

2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

NEW YORK



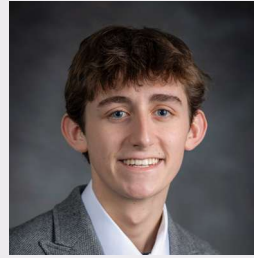
**Senator
Charles E. Schumer**



**Senator
Kirsten E. Gillibrand**



Nina Fascilla
Huntington
High School



Benjamin Skillings
Ballston Spa
High School

NORTH CAROLINA



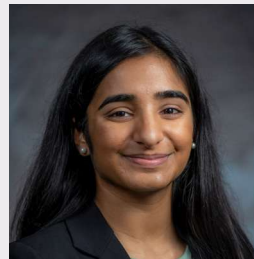
**Senator
Thom Tillis**



**Senator
Ted Budd**



Fatou Lo
Mount Tabor
High School



Sriya Vangala
Weddington
High School

NORTH DAKOTA



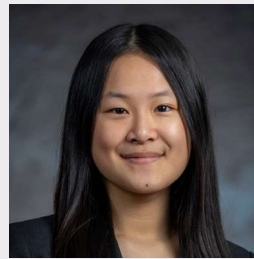
**Senator
John Hoeven**



**Senator
Kevin Cramer**



Martin Bergstedt
Enderlin Area School



Cady Wang
 Fargo Davies
High School

OHIO



**Senator
Bernie Moreno**



**Senator
Jon Husted**



Bishishta Acharya
Upper Arlington
High School



Nathan Kalhan
Hawken School

OKLAHOMA



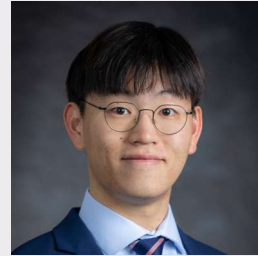
**Senator
James Lankford**



**Senator
Markwayne Mullin**



Hannah Cross
Homeschool



Alex Seojoon Kim
Stillwater
High School

OREGON



**Senator
Ron Wyden**



**Senator
Jeff Merkley**



Katie Jin
Catlin Gabel School



Annamika Konkola
West Linn
High School

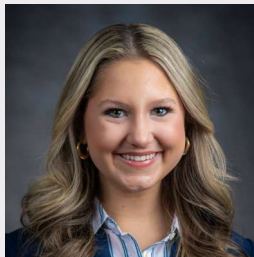
PENNSYLVANIA



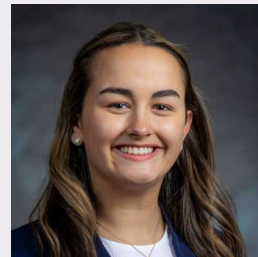
**Senator
John Fetterman**



**Senator
Dave McCormick**



Elizabeth Shacklett
The Agnes Irwin
School

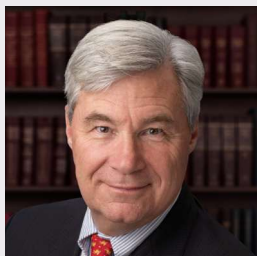


Anjali Verma
Pennsylvania
Leadership
Charter School

RHODE ISLAND



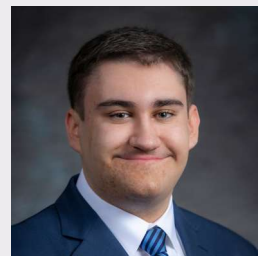
**Senator
Jack Reed**



**Senator
Sheldon Whitehouse**



Ashley Murphy
Portsmouth
High School



Landon Resendes
Middletown
High School

2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

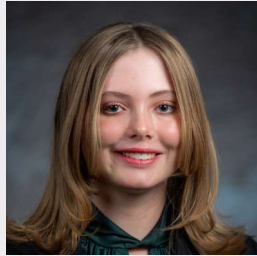
SOUTH CAROLINA



**Senator
Lindsey Graham**



**Senator
Tim Scott**



Emma Cash
White Knoll
High School



Carson Colmer
Aiken
High School

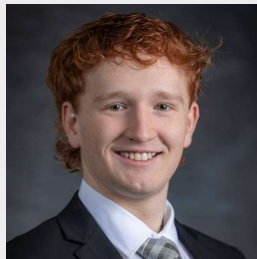
SOUTH DAKOTA



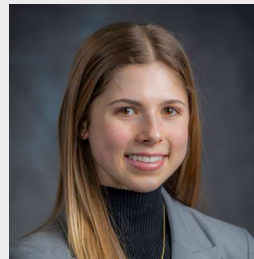
**Senator
John Thune**



**Senator
Michael Rounds**



Champ Baumgarten
Jefferson
High School



Sheridan Voorhees
Sully Buttes
High School

TENNESSEE



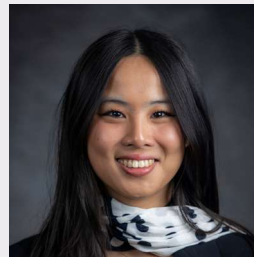
**Senator
Marsha Blackburn**



**Senator
Bill Hagerty**

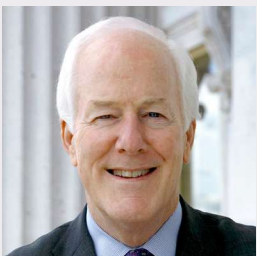


Oluwaseyi Amosun
Ravenwood
High School



Shuyu Sophie Lu
Farragut
High School

TEXAS



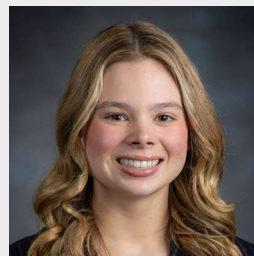
**Senator
John Cornyn**



**Senator
Ted Cruz**



Connor Gandy
North Garland
High School



Maribel Garza
Incarnate Word
Academy

UTAH



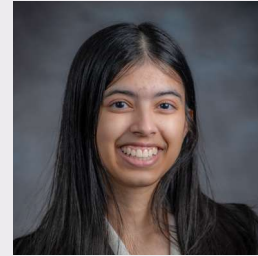
**Senator
Mike Lee**



**Senator
John Curtis**



Aingeleah Ford
Salem Hills
High School



Aaboli Samant
Utah Virtual Academy

VERMONT



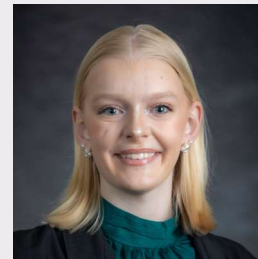
**Senator
Bernard Sanders**



**Senator
Peter Welch**



Grey Fearon
Vergennes Union
High School



Ellie Neckers
Lamoille Union
High School

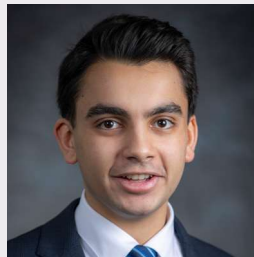
VIRGINIA



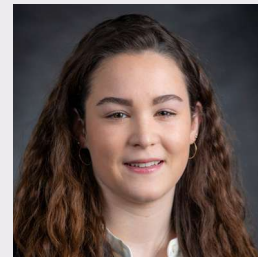
**Senator
Mark R. Warner**



**Senator
Tim Kaine**



Kasim Khapra
The Potomac School



Catherine Page
Bishop Ireton
High School

WASHINGTON



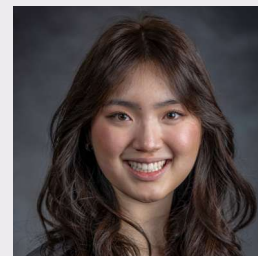
**Senator
Patty Murray**



**Senator
Maria Cantwell**



Ashlye Triebs
Columbia River
High School



Ellie Xue
Interlake
High School

2025 USSYP Senator and Delegate Roster

WEST VIRGINIA



**Senator
Shelley Moore Capito**



**Senator
Jim Justice**

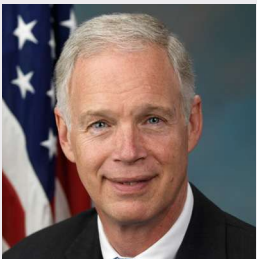


Joshua Copley
Tug Valley
High School



Louisa Pate
Jefferson
High School

WISCONSIN



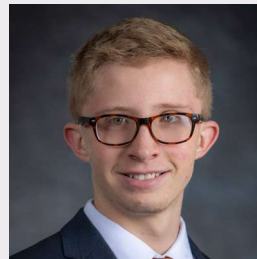
**Senator
Ron Johnson**



**Senator
Tammy Baldwin**



**Isabella
Dereszkiewicz-
Hodowany**
Sevastopol
High School

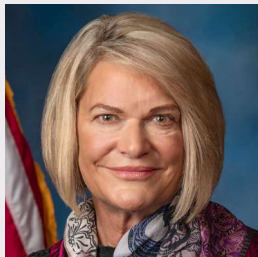


Nicholai Galusha
Greendale
High School

WYOMING



**Senator
John Barrasso, M.D.**



**Senator
Cynthia Lummis**



Deanna Davis
Cheyenne South
High School



Henry Phillips
Sheridan
High School





Washington Week 2025

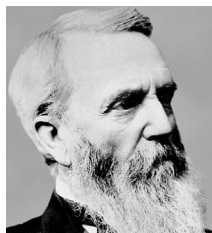


“USSYP doesn’t just give you a week — it provides a lifelong network of encouragement, support and shared purpose.”
Wilson Chau (HI-2025)





The Hearst Family: A Legacy of Service



George Hearst



Phoebe A. Hearst



William R. Hearst



George R. Hearst, Sr.



Randolph A. Hearst



Millicent A. Boudjakdji

For 63 years, the United States Senate Youth Program has brought thousands of America's brightest young students to Washington, instilling in them insight into the history and heritage of their democracy and encouraging them to be leaders of the future. Each year, the students return home with a sense of mission, new friendships and bonds that many term "life-changing."

1820

An exemplar of American success, George Hearst, born in 1820, went west to seek a future in mining and developed the family fortune. He served in the California State Legislature representing San Francisco, was appointed to the U.S. Senate in 1886 and served until his death in 1891. His wife, pioneering philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst, distinguished herself as one of America's most accomplished women, dedicated to historic, educational and children's causes. She co-founded the National Parent Teachers Association in 1897 and was instrumental in the reclamation and rehabilitation of George Washington's Mount Vernon property.

1863

William Randolph Hearst, their only child, was born in 1863 and became one of the great legends of American journalism. His vast media holdings were at the forefront of new communications technologies, including radio, television and specialty magazines. An avid student of history and politics, Hearst's newspapers detailed the history of the 20th century, and his public service included two terms as a Democratic Congressman from New York. During his life, he gave millions of dollars to colleges, hospitals, kindergartens and museums.

1946

William Randolph Hearst founded The Hearst Foundation, Inc. in 1946. Three years later, he established the California Charities Foundations, later renamed the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. Both Foundations are guided by the same charitable mission, which reflects the philanthropic interests of their founder: education, health, culture and social service.

1962

The United States Senate Youth Program was envisioned by William Randolph Hearst's sons, George R. Hearst and Randolph A. Hearst, who worked with the Senate leadership of the day – Senators Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey – to establish and authorize the program in 1962. Millicent Hearst Boudjakdji, granddaughter of William Randolph Hearst, continued the family legacy of leadership and commitment to the program as Foundation president.

Present Day

The Hearst Family carries on the tradition with strong personal support for The Foundation's two annual flagship initiatives: the United States Senate Youth Program and the William Randolph Hearst Journalism Awards Program. Founded in 1960, it honors journalistic excellence and supports education at accredited undergraduate schools of journalism nationwide.

The Hearst Foundations continue to support numerous charitable organizations across the country, awarding more than \$1.57 billion in funding across 23,000 grants since their creation, including 275 grants totaling more than \$52 million in 2024. This work helps to ensure that people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to build healthy, productive and inspiring lives.



"Senate Youth was a sacred intersection where youth met adulthood."

Jeeah Kim (AL-2025)



UNITED STATES SENATE ★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT

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