

Darrese Williams, GA - 2022

The honor of being selected to be a part of the United States Senate Youth Program doesn't feel real. It still hasn't clicked yet. I feel elated for the opportunity to represent the state of Georgia in the 60th annual United States Senate Youth Program. Since I was young, I've always loved history, and learning about it has always fascinated me. I would have never thought I would be making history as the first student to ever become a delegate in this prestigious program from Georgia Cyber Academy. This has inspired other students in my school to not only apply but to be active in their school and community. Becoming a delegate has inspired so many students to go for what they think is impossible.

An unforgettable moment during Washington week was the military mentor group (Senate Spartans with Lt. Hickey) debriefing from day one. We were asked our opinion on a quote from Senator Cory Gardner: "You can't change a pillar, so change the paint instead." This was in reference to approaching people with different beliefs and opinions especially politically. So the question was asked: "Can pillars change?" The delegates shared their specific answers. I waited to go after most of everyone so that I can have time to think it through. When it was my turn, my answer was, "I believe that pillars cannot change. However, it can fall based on the foundation of the pillar." Meaning that everyone can change in their own time. However, your beliefs and opinions can be founded on either solid or rocky origins. Therefore, if your beliefs and opinions are founded on rocky origins they can fall and become a new pillar.

Even though Washington Week this year was virtual, I still had a great experience! I've met my co-delegate, Mary Margaret Barbee, and so many other delegates. The greatest moment of the program in my opinion was the fellowship between my fellow delegates and me. I've built so many lasting friendships with bonds that happened instantly. Even though we were all different in some way form or fashion, we were all able to come together, listen and hear other perspectives, and respectfully ask questions/comments. The delegates signified the universal theme of all of the speakers: UNITY. This is what the society of America needs more of today.

I am proud to be a part of this great legacy through the United States Senate Youth Program. So many amazing individuals have been a part of this program either as delegates, speakers, or both! It's an amazing opportunity to get to be a delegate and form relationships with my fellow students who are the next generation of world changers. I am very excited to see all of the great things the future holds. Special thank you to everyone who made my lifetime memory possible! This experience will forever be a special part of my legacy.