

Nathan Mock, IN – 2022

One thing that I have realized after my time as a United States Senate Youth Program delegate is that, as well-written as the online descriptions are or as well-spoken as Program Director Rayne Guilford is, words will never do it justice. Even though this year's program was (and is hopefully the last to be) online, we all still felt its gravity. Music by the United States Field Army Band, the eloquence of Major Cox — it symbolized the life-changing experience that begins with Washington Week.

The people I met through USSYP have some of the brightest political minds on the planet — the delegates and the distinguished guests. In our private meeting, the other Indiana delegate and I had an engaging discussion with Senator Young on the foundational issues relevant in our Republic today — our first taste of the world's greatest deliberative body. My favorite speakers of Washington Week, General Mark Milley and Secretary Pete Buttigieg (whom, as a fellow Hoosier, I had the privilege to introduce), also relied on reason more than rhetoric on the toughest issues — as you might imagine, many were raised. As an intellectual, this was the best unspoken welcome from the world of public service.

I said previously that the USSYP experience “begins with Washington Week” — that is because, as a delegate, you never leave this community. With folks who joke about campaign burnout to former delegates who can arrange an on-the-spot West Wing walkthrough, I cannot wait to bring wit and wisdom to the table in our collective striving for a more perfect Union. To close with our recent rallying cry,

“Next year at the Mayflower!”