

Will Rues, KS – 2022

When my counselor first brought up a program called something like a Senate Youth Program, I was originally skeptical, until I heard about the scholarship amount. I started this whole experience with the thought of the scholarship, but it grew into something far more extraordinary. The more I read into it, the more I grew interested and thought I had to do this, but it still remained distant to me. I quickly submitted my application on the day it had to be postmarked and forgot about it until I received the test. After I completed the test, the idea of it becoming reality came closer, but still distant in my mind. It was one late night of me procrastinating and during homework at 11 o'clock when I got this email with the subject "USSYP Congratulations! Important Delegate Information." The sudden realization when I read the email, and subsequently woke up my mom, was amazing.

The magnitude of speakers was very impressive. The experience started off with speakers Senator Cory Gardner and Judge Robert Henry. Both of them, along with most speakers, spoke on the issue of polarization and how these elected officials reflect society, which can be said about most institutions in the United States. Judge Henry definitely educated me on parts of the judicial branch that can be very misunderstood. He talked about how Supreme Court justice nominees with different backgrounds will always receive flack, just like President Reagan got from nominating the first woman justice, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; and how President Biden is getting negative feedback from nominating Justice Jackson.

Betty Koed, a Senate Historian, clearly showed how the phrase "Those that fail to learn history are doomed to repeat it" is a very accurate assessment. I'm glad to hear her talk about Costigan and his relentless effort to get an Anti-lynching bill to be passed in the 1930s and hearing about it being passed just a month after the session was very fitting. That is not the only piece of news I read that related to the session after it ended.

I first heard of the name Linda Fagan when I was in one of my Military Mentor sessions with my military commander Lieutenant Commander Concepcion and she talked about she was crossing her fingers and was hoping she would make history and be the first commandant of the Coast Guard. When I saw the news of her promotion, the first thing I thought of was that experience with my military mentor. I believe that this will not be the last I see something, either in the news or in real life, and be able to relate it to my experience with this program. I always carry my journal with me in my binder. I definitely did not take as meticulous or neat notes as my other delegates and was very awestruck when one of the delegates said she took some 90 pages of notes, but my small sample of notes can still help me guide me through life whenever I need it.

Speaking about other delegates, I had the pleasure of being added to the delegate Snapchat group. Reading some of the messages made me realize that we all can relate to each other, even though I live thousands of miles away from some of the delegates, and how it has shown me how the future of this nation is in very good hands, and how the idea of making a more nearly perfect union is very attainable.