

Micah Lightfoot, MN – 2022

When hearing that I had been chosen as a delegate for United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP), representing the great state of New Mexico, I was overjoyed and honored beyond belief. The reputation that this program has is very impressive and I am honored to be an alumni member. I was a little disappointed when it was announced that it had to be fully online this year because I hoped to get the full experience. I was very eager to meet new people and make as many new connections as I possibly could.

When starting the program, I instantly started building connections from the moment I met with my home state senators, going to my first military mentor group zoom, and hanging out in the delegate hang out zooms. As the first zoom meeting began, which separated each of us by thousands of miles, somehow, I never felt closer to them. The USSYP program met and exceeded my expectations in so many ways. The organization and timeliness were very efficient and allowed for a perfect balance of Q & A's, thoughtful conversation, breaks from the computer, and memorable moments with fellow delegates. The guest speakers who had been scheduled were extremely inspiring and patriotic in the best ways.

The most impactful speaker that will always stick with me as I continue to pursue a career is Carmen Romero, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General of Public Diplomacy. Ms. Romero was by far my favorite speaker because of her unwavering commitment to have world peace and a solid unity between all NATO nations. I live in a very small town in a very isolated and rural area and sometimes it is hard for me to grasp the issues that are occurring out of our country. Listening to Ms. Romero, I learned so much about the Ukraine and Russia situation and the importance of NATO in this issue where so many thin lines exist between countries in our world.

I feel very grateful to have learned more about our country and the leaders that are doing things every day that are not always seen to keep our country great. I am honored to have received this amazing opportunity and will forever cherish the friendships and connections that I made. I am also grateful to the leaders of our country whom I got to learn from; they truly inspired me to consider a career of service to this great nation. I appreciate the time and planning that was put into the program from each and every person on the USSYP staff.

Sincerely,

Micah Lightfoot - NM