

## **Arundhati Oommen, UT – 2022**

It was such an honor and privilege to participate in the 60th annual United States Senate Youth Program - as a delegate representing the state of Utah.

While the program was conducted online, rather than in-person, every day was full of robust and exciting activities and events. I particularly enjoyed the way that USSYP fostered connections between delegates in their home states through the virtual “Roll Call of the States” which gave both me and my co-delegate the opportunity to start a new friendship and to discuss the incredible achievements of Martha Hughes Cannon - a skilled physician, ardent suffragist, progressive public health reformer, and most notably, the first female state senator in the United States.

As we stood before her statue, towering over us, I thought of Martha Hughes Cannon’s legacy and lifetime spent blazing trails for women like me. While Martha Hughes Cannon’s statue will be sent to Washington D.C., at her new home in the U.S. Capitol, her commitment to public service and shattering glass ceilings for women across the country is also emblematic of the investment that USSYP considers for their female delegates, presenting all 102 delegates with an incredible array of women who have dedicated their lives to public service. Whether from different backgrounds, states, or countries, every single young woman who was part of the 60th annual United States Senate Youth Program, could see themselves and envision a future in public service.

In USSYP’s commitment to diversity and highlighting a variety of interests, some of the most memorable speakers were: Vanita Gupta - U.S. Associate Attorney General, Linda Thomas-Greenfield - Ambassador for the United States to the U.N., Susan Collins - U.S. Senator from Maine, and our very own military mentor, Lieutenant Commander Megan Concepcion.

Having the opportunity to ask questions and speak with such an array of incredible and committed women was truly unforgettable. Thank you to USSYP and all the remarkable delegates for providing me with the honor of an unparalleled experience.