

**Brandon Frazier, WV – 2022**

To begin, I cannot overstate how honored and proud I am to have been given the opportunity to represent my state in the United States Senate Youth Program. I would have never thought that I would be colleagues with such talented, distinguished members of our generation, and I am proud to have served as a delegate in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this distinguished program.

With all that is transpiring, both at home and abroad, it is easy for one to be consumed by a sense of pessimism and dread. In terms of international issues, we are facing the established power of Russia in addition to the rising power of China. This is not to mention economic threats posed by these nations. Domestically, our issues are too numerous to list. We are looking at a decay of trust in American Government, media, and democracy as a whole. Extremism and division are rife on all sides of the political spectrum, resulting in political violence and partisanship becoming normalized. We are still suffering from economic damage caused by the pandemic, as well as the renewed threat of inflation. Our infrastructure is crumbling, our prisons overflowing, the list goes on. So, with all of this considered, I have felt rather hopeless about our future. The United States Senate Youth Program changed that.

During my time in the USSYP, I met brilliant minds both in my generation and serving our nation today. I see the actions being taken to remedy the challenges we are facing, as well as the men and women behind these actions. I was shown the inherent issues with solving these problems, which brought to light just how important our leaders are. Most importantly, I saw the future of our nation in my fellow delegates. I have seen their intelligence, courage, kindness, and passion throughout Washington Week. With their inherent abilities being further enhanced by the wonderful guests we had at Washington Week, I have no doubt that the future of America is in good hands. To conclude, while America is facing tremendous threats, both domestic and abroad, I believe that the leaders and delegates I had the pleasure of meeting will be up to the challenges we face. Again, many thanks to our guests, the Hearst Foundations, our Washington Week staff, and all of my fellow delegates. You are all a beacon of hope in these troubling times.