

### **Alissa Davis, WV – 2023**

The 61<sup>st</sup> annual United States Senate Youth Program was amazing! Every detail and event of the week was perfectly planned and beautifully executed. From the moment I arrived at the Mayflower Hotel I was immersed in history, and a collective passion for change immediately seen in every delegate.

Entering into the first night of the program we were introduced to our first keynote speaker; Yale Student Body President Bayan Galal, a fellow USSYP alum of the 2019 program. She said, “The capacity for change is a gift, the ability to change is a skill, but the will to make a change—that is a choice.” At the conclusion of that first night I was met with a renewed desire to serve my community and my nation. I felt change welling with the words not yet said and the things I could one day achieve along with my fellow delegates. I left the program feeling immensely empowered and hopeful for the future.

My favorite events of the week were the trip to the National Archives building and the Senate Reception the following day. On those days I was able to meet with West Virginia’s wonderful leaders, Senator Shelley Moore Capito and Senator Joe Manchin. Senator Capito was very personable and open to discussion during our dinner at the National Archives. I was honored to be chosen to deliver the introductory remarks for Senator Capito, a leader whom I greatly admire, in the same location as our nation’s founding documents. It was without a doubt one of the greatest nights of my life.

The entirety of my experience participating in the United States Senate Youth Program was one of learning, joy, passion for change, and a genuine gift. I am so thankful for The Hearst Foundations and all of the amazing people who made this event possible. I am so grateful to have been chosen to participate along with such outstanding individuals. I will cherish the experience forever.