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SEAL OF THE STATE  
**STATE OF ALASKA**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
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**Press Release**

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Alaska Students Named to U.S. Senate Youth Program**

JUNEAU – Christian Escalante, a student at Unalaska City High School, and Grant Ackerman, a student at West Valley High School in Fairbanks, have been named Alaska's delegates to the United States Senate Youth Program by Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley.

Delegates will spend a week in March in Washington, D.C., where they will hear policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of the departments of State and Defense, and directors of federal agencies. Students also will meet a Supreme Court justice. Attendees will receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

States also name alternate delegates, who serve if their primary delegates cannot attend Washington Week. Alaska's first alternate is Kari Jahnsen, a student at South Anchorage High School. The second alternate is Robert Miller, a student at Steller Secondary in Anchorage.

Delegates are chosen based on grades, test scores, letters of recommendation, an essay on their leadership in student government and the community, and a persuasive essay on an issue of national importance. The program was created by the U.S. Senate and is funded by the Hearst Foundations. It is intended to foster careers in public service.

"It was difficult to choose from so many good applications," Commissioner Hanley said. "The applicants were impressive in their duty to their school and community while maintaining high academic achievement. Our delegates are a credit to Alaska."

Ms. Escalante has served in student government throughout high school and is the student representative to her district's school board. She volunteers with the Lions Club, Alaska Tobacco Control Alliance, the American Cancer Society, and the Alaska Network for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention.

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Mr. Ackerman has served as senior class president, a delegate at the Alaska Teen Leadership Summit, and an envoy of the U.S. in the Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute. He actively supports the local teen homeless shelter.

Ms. Jahnsen has served on the Anchorage Youth Court. She is an academic all-American with the National Speech and Debate Association and a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist, and has served as the Alaska representative to Girls Nation.

Mr. Miller is an active member of his school's governing boards. He serves on the board of directors for the Anchorage Youth Court, and participates in the Model United Nations of Alaska.

For more information on the program in Alaska, contact Bjorn Wolter, Ph.D., at the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development at 907-465-6542 or [bjorn.wolter@alaska.gov](mailto:bjorn.wolter@alaska.gov). Also see [www.ussenateyouth.org](http://www.ussenateyouth.org)

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