



63rd Annual

UNITED STATES SENATE
★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:
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Alaska Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program
Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship

January 13, 2025, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) is pleased to announce that high school students Mr. Joshua Joon Pak and Ms. Adalgisa Sylvia Reigh will join Senator Lisa Murkowski and Senator Daniel Sullivan in representing Alaska during the 63rd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 1 — 8, 2025. Joshua Pak of Anchorage and Adalgisa Reigh of Dillingham were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation that will attend meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, and other officials throughout the week. Each delegate will also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study.

The USSYP was founded in 1962 by the sons of William Randolph Hearst and the senate leadership of the day -- Senators Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey – in response to the deep divisiveness and national anxiety following the McCarthy era. They outlined a plan to encourage America's most talented young people to consider public service as an important, life-long, and noble pursuit, sponsoring Senate Resolution 324, which passed unanimously. As stated in founding testimony, the program strives "to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, learn the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and emphasize the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world."

Each year this extremely competitive merit-based program provides two outstanding high school students from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity with an intensive week-long study of the federal government and the people who lead it. Each student will also receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs. The Hearst Foundations have fully funded the program since inception; as stipulated, no government funds are utilized. ([United State Senate Resolution 324](#))

Joshua Pak, a senior at Polaris K-12 School, serves as president of the Anchorage School District Student Advisory Board. In his role on the National Federation of High Schools National Student Advisory Council, he leads discussions to assess problems and devise solutions for over 12 million U.S. athletes and performing artists. He travels to different corners of Alaska on the state Board of Education and Early Development as the student advisor, ensuring that students' voices on education are at the forefront of decision making. He has been elected as the student representative of the Anchorage School District School Board for two terms. As Anchorage Youth Court's Bar president, Joshua works to lower recidivism rates and is a presiding judge in cases involving his peers He has administered journalistic mentorships between American journalists and students in Ukraine who have been afflicted by the war through the Holos Project. Joshua has earned the Congressional Award Gold Medal and was selected as the 2025 National Education Association Alaska Exemplary Student Award winner. He plans to attend law school after college and work in the legal field as an attorney and judge, hoping to one days serve as a senator and Supreme Court justice.

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2025 Alaska Delegate Announcement
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Adalgisa (Gisa) Reigh, a senior at Dillingham High School, serves as president of the Student Body. Having grown up in rural Southwest Alaska, she has worked in the commercial fishing industry since she was nine and participated in subsistence activities her entire life. Gisa's community is the source of her motivation, and she earned regional and national medals from the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards writing about her experiences. In her roles as president of the Student Council and chair of the National Honor Society she organizes various school and community events promoting positive change. She is also very involved in extracurricular activities, having qualified a flute solo to the state competition three times and co-captaining her co-ed wrestling team. Gisa plans to attend college, studying nutrition or sustainability.

Chosen as alternates to the 2025 program were Ms. Xinlan Abigail Tanner, a resident of Kenai, who attends Connections School and Mr. Erik Vincent, a resident of Valdez, who attends Valdez High School.

Delegates and alternates are selected by the state departments of education nationwide and the District of Columbia and Department of Defense Education Activity, after nomination by teachers and principals. The chief state school officer for each jurisdiction confirms the final selection. This year's Alaska delegates and alternates were designated by Deena Bishop, Commissioner of Education.

In addition to outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to volunteer work, the student delegates rank academically in the top one percent of their states among high school juniors and seniors. Now more than 6,200 strong, alumni of the program continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. Among the many distinguished alumni are: Senator Susan Collins, the first alumna to be elected U.S. senator; Secretary of Transportation and former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, Pete Buttigieg, the first alumna to be appointed as a cabinet secretary; Representative Sarah McBride, the second alumna to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; former Senator Cory Gardner, the second alumna to be elected U.S. senator and the first to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first alumna to be elected governor.

Members of the U. S. Senate Youth Program 2025 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina, the 2025 USSYP Republican Co-Chair and Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the 2025 USSYP Democratic Co-Chair. The full USSYP Senate Advisory Committee includes the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders, and four senators from each party who lend their names in support. Serving on the 2025 Advisory Committee: Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine, Senator John Cornyn of Texas, Senator Jerry Moran of Kansas, Senator Pete Ricketts of Nebraska, Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada, Senator Tina Smith of Minnesota and Senator Peter Welch of Vermont.

For more information please visit: www.ussenateyouth.org

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