



Dear parents, teachers, principals, and superintendents:

The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) has begun its statewide selection process. In March, two Alaskan students will join 104 other delegates for the program's 60th annual Washington Week—an intensive week-long educational program about the workings of the Senate and the federal government overall. USSYP is sponsored by the US Senate and privately funded by The Hearst Foundation.

State delegates will have outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to public service. They generally rank in the top one percent of their states academically. After Washington Week, delegates continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. **Each state delegate will receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship, in addition to the all-expenses paid trip to the nation's capital.** The student delegates will visit Capitol Hill, the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department, the Supreme Court, and other historic sites in Washington. The agenda routinely includes meetings with Senators, the President, Cabinet Secretaries, a Justice of the Supreme Court, senior members of the national media, and other policy makers.

The 60th Senate Youth Program Week will take place in **Washington, D.C., on March 5th thru 12th** and state designees will be required to attend all days. The entire week will be planned and coordinated by the Hearst Foundation. It will include many specific functions and events at national landmarks; however, personal free time will be extremely limited. Applicants should take this under consideration when applying.

The delegate selection is administered by each state's chief school officer in cooperation with high school principals. Eligible delegates must be:

1. Current high school ***juniors or seniors***
2. An ***elected*** student officer for the ***entire*** 2021-2022 academic years (*Please reference the 2022 brochure for a complete list of eligible positions.*)
3. Residents of Alaska

Each student must be a resident of the United States and currently enrolled in a public or private secondary school located in the state (including for these purposes the District of Columbia) in which either one of his or her parents or guardians legally resides. Exceptions to the residency rule are made for the Department of Defense Education Activity and for states with schools operating under interstate education compacts.

Following this announcement are the 2022 brochure, student application, and an essay on the experience by one of last year's delegates. Page 1 of the application includes a detailed checklist of required submission items. Please use this checklist to ensure your application is complete. Incomplete applications will **not** be considered.

The Alaska application deadline is **November 1, 2021, at 4pm.**

The candidate selection process is three part:

1. Students who submit complete applications will be initially ranked based on a rubric provided by the Hearst Foundation.
2. The top ten applicants will be invited to take the 2022 United State Senate Youth Program Public Affairs and History Exam. This is a proctored exam that will affect an applicant's total score and potential selection as a USSYP candidate.
3. After performance on the USSYP exam is factored in, the top five applicants may also be asked to sit for a Zoom interview with the selection committee. Performance during this interview will affect the applicant's total score and potential selection as a USSYP candidate.

The names of students selected will be formally announced mid-December. For more information, interested students in Alaska should contact either their high school principal or myself via the contact information below. They may also access information via the DEED Scholarships & Recognition webpage at <https://education.alaska.gov/recognitionprograms/>

Sincerely,

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UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

EDUCATION ★ LEADERSHIP ★ PUBLIC SERVICE

60TH ANNUAL
WASHINGTON WEEK

MARCH 5–12, 2022

ussenateyouth.org

104 STUDENTS WILL BE SELECTED FOR A WEEK-LONG GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM AND WILL EACH RECEIVE A \$10,000 UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP.

The United States Senate unanimously passed a resolution in 1962 creating the UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM (USSYP), a national nonpartisan initiative to provide an annual opportunity for talented high school students with demonstrated leadership abilities to deepen their understanding of America's political processes and strengthen their resolve to pursue careers in public service.

The USSYP brings the highest-level officials from each branch of government to meet with this outstanding group of young leaders—two high school juniors or seniors from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)—for an intensive week-long education and leadership program to be held either in Washington, D.C., or online. The program is merit-based and highly competitive. Each student will also receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science. Now in its 60th year, the program has been fully funded since inception by THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS as an enduring commitment to preparing young people for civic leadership in our participatory democracy.

Numbering more than 5,900, USSYP alumni serve the country in many ways. They have become leaders in government, law, business, education, journalism, the military, medicine, health care, higher education and many other fields. Alumni serve as elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, including a current United States senator, a current cabinet secretary, many congressional staff members, a former governor, former senior political advisors to the president of the United States, former ambassadors and former federal judges. The commonality to all of their success is the desire to serve.

THE PROGRAM

THE 60TH ANNUAL UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM IS BEING PLANNED FOR MARCH 5–12, 2022 IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THE PROGRAM MAY BE HELD ONLINE PENDING PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE, TO BE DETERMINED IN THE FALL OF 2021.

Delegates will hear major policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and Defense, leaders of other federal agencies and senior members of the national media. Delegates also traditionally participate in a meeting with a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and the president of the United States. Most speaking events include in-depth question and answer sessions.

The Hearst Foundations will pay all expenses for Washington Week including transportation, hotel and meals if held in person. The Department of Defense (DoD) annually provides a team of competitively selected men and women officers to serve as mentors and chaperones for the student delegates, and a registered nurse, licensed physician and professional security team are in place at all times throughout an in-person week.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Two student delegates and a first and second alternate will be designated by the chief school officer from each state, the District of Columbia and DoDEA by December 1, 2021. The Hearst Foundations will provide \$1,000 to each state-level department of education to assist with the selection expenses for the program, and will also provide a rigorous public affairs examination that may be used in the selection process. Applications are generally submitted in late summer and early fall, and may be obtained from high school principals, school counselors, or obtained directly from the state-level selection administrator or their state department of education website. **Application deadline dates and processes vary by state, and specific application materials may be found on most state department of education websites.** All state contacts, websites and deadlines are accessible on the USSYP website: www.usenateyouth.org

HOW TO QUALIFY

Qualified high school juniors or seniors must show demonstrated leadership by serving in elected or appointed positions in which they are actively representing a constituency in organizations related to student government, education, public affairs and community service. They must be actively serving in qualified leadership positions, enrolled in high school and living in the state (and for these purposes the District of Columbia) that they will represent for the entire 2021–2022 academic year.

The DoDEA central administrative office will select the DoDEA delegates and alternates residing overseas. Military dependents who reside and attend schools in the U.S. shall apply for the program under the RESIDENCY ruling shown below.

Alternate delegates will be selected as replacements if a primary delegate is unable to participate in Washington Week. If the primary delegate is unable to attend, The Hearst Foundations must be notified in advance. **Attendance during the entire Washington Week program, whether online or in person, is required to receive the financial scholarship;** appropriate disposition of scholarship funds will be determined by the program director if a primary delegate is unable to attend the program due to emergency circumstances, or is dismissed.

Selection will be based on the student's outstanding abilities and demonstrated qualities of leadership in an elected or appointed student office for the entire 2021–2022 school year. The primary purposes of the qualifying leadership position must be representation of a constituency and service to others. A student who graduates high school at the close of the fall 2021 semester/quarter is not eligible to apply for the program, and students other than DoDEA delegates must be residing in one state of primary residence in the U.S. during the entire 2021–2022 academic year to participate.

1. Any high school junior or senior student is eligible for the program provided they have not previously been a delegate to Washington Week and has not received a USSYP scholarship.

The student must hold a high-level leadership position in any one of the following student government, civic or educational organizations during the entire 2021-2022 academic year:

- a. Student Body president, vice president, secretary or treasurer
 - b. Class president, vice president, secretary or treasurer
 - c. Student Council representative
 - d. A National Honor Society officer (including discipline-based Honor Societies such as the National English and Social Studies Honor Societies that include service components)
 - e. Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission or board) to a local, district, regional or state-level civic, service and/or educational organization approved by the state selection administrator, where the student holds a position of representation to a constituency providing service to others.
2. **Participation or holding an officer position in academic clubs, educational competition programs/conferences, or organizations designed primarily for the student's personal development and enrichment do not qualify a student for the USSYP, although many students who qualify participate in these activities. The positions listed below DO NOT qualify the student for the program:**

- Attendance or officer position at Boys/ Girls Nation or State summer conference
- Member of a National Honor Society (serving as an elected officer for the organization for the entire school year is acceptable)
- Member or leader of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or JROTC
- A founder or chairperson of a self-created group
- A participant, captain or officer in Mock Trial, Debate Team, Model UN, or other academic club, mock legislature, conference or competition where the primary engagement is for individual educational enrichment.

RESIDENCY: Each student must be a legal permanent resident or citizen of the United States at the time of application. Students must be enrolled for the entire academic year in a public or independent high school located in the state (and for these purposes the District of Columbia) in which at least one of their parents or guardians currently resides. Home-educated students must be approved by their state department of education to apply.

Exceptions to the residency requirement will only be made in the following cases:

- a. Students from DoDEA overseas will represent the state(s) of which the parents/guardians are U.S. legal voting residents. Students attending DoD schools in the U.S. or students enrolled through U.S. military bases in local schools must be residing in the state in which their school is located for the entire academic year.

- b. Students may reside in a state other than the state in which they attend school if they are enrolled in the only designated public high school available to them in a school district that crosses contiguous state borders through legal interstate agreement. Students in these schools shall make application to the program through the state where the high school is located and shall represent that state if selected.

PROGRAM RULES

1. **All delegates must agree to fully block both arrival and departure travel days to participate in Washington Week OR fully block all online program days if held virtually.**
2. **NO TOURS OR TRIPS WILL BE PERMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL DELEGATES WHILE TRAVELING TO OR FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. OR WHILE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS POLICY INCLUDES ANY OTHER OUTSIDE ACTIVITY, CONFERENCE, SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION OR EVENT OF ANOTHER ORGANIZATION WHICH IS CONDUCTED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. OR THE SURROUNDING AREA DURING THE TIME FRAME OF THE USSYP WASHINGTON WEEK, AND INCLUDES ANY OUTSIDE APPOINTMENT OR EVENT DURING AN ONLINE PROGRAM WEEK.**

All travel provided by The Hearst Foundations is round-trip only and scheduled within the time frames listed below:

- ARRIVAL D.C.: Saturday, March 5
between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM**
- DEPARTURE D.C.: Saturday, March 12
between 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM**
3. The chief state school officer from each state, the District of Columbia and DoDEA must submit in writing to The Hearst Foundations by **DECEMBER 1, 2021** the names of the two delegates and two alternates. Upon confirmation of qualifications, the program requires each delegate to submit a statement of participation, a code of conduct agreement and medical release to be signed by students and parents/legal guardians.
 4. **Code of Conduct:** Delegates will be the guests of the United States Senate and The Hearst Foundations throughout the program, whether in person or online, and are required to conduct themselves with civility, dignity and professionalism. Debate and discussion are actively encouraged in an environment of tolerance, respect and inclusion. Students selected to the program are serving as at-large public representatives of their states, communities and schools, and attend the program to learn from the speakers and from one another. Students are prohibited from engaging in lobbying, petitioning, protest or overt political activism during Washington Week. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated.
 5. It will be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians to transport (at their expense) each delegate to the nearest commercial airport or train station that provides round-trip travel to Washington, D.C. from their hometown. **All itineraries will be designed for the least amount of travel time and most direct routing.**

6. No arrangements for individual religious practices or services other than dietary guidelines will be made during an in-person Washington Week. This policy will be strictly observed from the time the student delegates arrive at the Washington area airports, train station and program site until they return home.
7. The program does not allow any individual or group athletic activities outside of the hotel facility.
8. Failure to abide by rules and requirements of the program will result in dismissal from the program and forfeiture of the \$10,000 scholarship award. Rules related to the USSYP and scholarship award shall be construed, interpreted and applied by The Hearst Foundations, whose action and determination shall be final and binding.

SCHOLARSHIP

The Hearst Foundations believe it is in the public interest to encourage these outstanding young people to continue their educational development. The \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship award is subject to the conditions and requirements specified below. Additional detailed scholarship information will be provided to the delegates after Washington Week. Certificates representing the award will be presented to the delegates during their visit to Washington, D.C., often personally signed by their senators.

SCHOLARSHIP RULES

1. **The \$10,000 college scholarship and attendance at the Washington Week program are one, inseparable award.** Delegates must participate in the Washington Week program in accordance with all program rules and policies in order to receive the financial scholarship.
2. **The USSYP scholarship is designated for undergraduate college study only** at an accredited United States college or university. All students are encouraged to include history, political science or related subjects in their undergraduate program.
3. The \$10,000 scholarship is designated for the specified student's education expense and must be used within four years after enrollment. Funds are paid directly to the college or university in the student's behalf. No funds may be given directly to a student. The scholarship will be issued in either one payment of \$10,000 or increments of \$5,000 or \$2,500.
4. Students attending military academies (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard) may draw the USSYP scholarship per the guidelines to purchase required military uniforms, books, computer equipment and other educational materials.
5. A delegate will automatically forfeit eligibility for a scholarship award by failure to abide by all rules and requirements pertaining to the program and the scholarship or in the event of misconduct as a delegate to the United States Senate Youth Program.



UNITED STATES SENATE
★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION · LEADERSHIP · PUBLIC SERVICE

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UNITED STATES SENATE RESOLUTION 324

In 1962, Senate Resolution 324, submitted by Senator KUCHEL (for himself and Senators MANSFIELD, DIRKSEN, and HUMPHREY), was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration, and, subsequently, unani- mously approved by the United State Senate as follows:

WHEREAS the continued vitality of our Republic depends, in part, on the intelligent understanding of our political processes and the functions of our National Government by the citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS the durability of a constitutional democracy is dependent upon alert, talented, vigorous competition for political leadership; and

WHEREAS individual Senators have coop- erated with various private and university undergraduate and graduate fellowship and internship programs relating to the work of Congress; and

WHEREAS in the high schools of the United States, there exists among students who have been elected to student body of- fices in their junior or senior year a potential reservoir of young citizens who are experiencing their first responsibilities of service to a constituency and who should be encouraged to deepen their interest in and understanding of their country’s political process: Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate hereby expresses its willingness to cooperate in a nationwide competitive high school Senate youth program which would give several represen- tative high school students from each State a short indoctrination into the operation of the United States Senate and the Federal Government generally, if such a program can be satisfactorily arranged and completely supported by private funds with no expense to the Federal Government.

RESOLUTION 146. To amend S. Res. 324 of the Eighty-seventh Congress to provide for the participation of the Department of Defense education system for dependents in overseas areas in the Senate Youth Program. Resolved, That S. Res. 324, Eighty-seventh Congress, agreed to May 17, 1963, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

Section 3. For the purpose of this resolution, the term “State” includes the Department of Defense education system for dependents in overseas areas.

THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS

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State of Alaska
United States Senate Youth Program
Information and Application Form for School Year 2021-2022

Information

Completed application packages will include all application materials, and must be received by the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development before **4:00 p.m., Monday, November 1, 2021**.

Each set of application materials must include:

1. One official application form with the principal's **original signature in blue ink**;
2. One copy of a current, official academic transcript;
3. Two essays;
4. Responses to the two short-answer questions noted below; and
5. Two letters of support.

More detailed information about each of these requirements can be found in the Application Requirements Checklist section below.

Application Requirements Checklist

1. Official application form:
 - a. Completed form must be signed by your school principal in blue ink;
 - b. The **elected school leadership position** you are applying under must be clearly identified. You must serve in this position for the **entire 2021-2022 academic year**. List **only** this position on the form.
 - c. **Each school may recommend only one candidate.**
2. Transcript:
 - a. Your current, **official** academic transcript and class rank **sent directly from your school registrar or principal to DEED**;
 - b. Transcripts must include the student's **non-weighted GPA**. This is non-negotiable. Transcripts that do not include a non-weighted GPA will be deemed ineligible. *DEED will not calculate non-weighted GPAs for students.*
3. Two essays:
 - a. A personal essay describing each of the following elements as they pertain to you:
 - i. Current position held, involvement in student government, and community service
 - ii. Activities and achievements that demonstrate leadership in school and community
 - iii. The personality trait that has been your greatest asset in leadership situations
 - iv. Your plans for the future, including any plans for public service.
 - b. A persuasive essay researched and written by the applicant on a topic of social significance related to contemporary state, national, or world events. Select a topic important to you, take a stand, relate its import to you, and defend your position. The essay will be judged on organization, ideas and content, evidence of personalization, and writing conventions *including citation of sources.*
 - c. Each essay must be titled, typed in 10-12 point font, double-spaced and not to exceed two pages with one-inch margins all around. Your works cited page for the persuasive essay is not included in the maximum page length.

4. Short-answer question responses.
 - a. Answer **both** of the following questions:
 - i. *Define political activism for yourself personally. How do rules/laws/morals and values affect your own political activism? How do you judge whether your activism has been successful or not?*
 - ii. *Describe a turning point event in U.S. history before 1950 and offer your thoughts on the impact of that event on today's political climate.*
 - b. Each question response should be no more than a single page, typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.
5. Two Letters of Support:
 - a. One from the school principal or school counselor;
 - b. One from an adult advisor to the organization or student body entity that you represent as an elected official;
 - c. Send only the two requested letters.

All above items must be submitted with the application package. **Do not send extra materials. They will not be considered.**

United States Senate Youth Program Descriptions

USSYP Washington Week Program

The USSYP will hold Washington Week in person in Washington D.C. from March 5-12, 2022. One hundred and four student delegates will follow an intensive schedule of meetings and briefings with senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and Defense, and representatives of the U.S. Supreme Court. Delegates will visit the White House and tour historic sites, monuments, and museums in our nation's capital. The Hearst Foundation will pay all expenses for the program, including transportation, hotel, and meals.

USSYP College Scholarship

Each delegate who participates in the USSYP Washington Week will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship from The William Randolph Hearst Foundation, subject to the conditions and requirements specified in the program regulations. Additional information concerning the scholarship will be given to delegates by the Hearst Foundations after Washington Week. *Attendance during the full Washington Week program is required to receive the college scholarship.*

Application Qualification Rules

A currently enrolled high school junior or senior student living in Alaska (irrespective of race, national origin, gender or financial need) is eligible for the program provided he or she has not previously been a program recipient, is now a permanent resident of the United States and has a parent or guardian legally residing in Alaska, will not graduate prior to the spring of 2022, and has been elected as a year-long representative to serve in any of the following **during the entire 2021-2022 academic year**:

- Student body president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
- Class president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer
- Student council representative
- Student representative to a district, regional or state-level civic or education organization
- Student representative to a tribal government

For more information on qualifying positions, please refer to pages 2 and 3 of the 2021 USSYP brochure. Exceptions to the residency rule are made for Department of Defense Education Activity.

Selection Process

The selection panel will assess indicators of leadership ability, high scholastic achievement, ability to think logically and communicate clearly, and community and school involvement. The top ten finalists may be asked to complete a civics examination and/or participate in a Skype interview during the selection process.

Important Reminders

- Submit all complete application as a single Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) file. If you do not know how to do this, ask for help from a local source.
- Make sure any scanned pages are completely legible.
- Your principal's signature must be in blue ink on the application form.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- The letters of support **must accompany** the application.
- Have your registrar submit your official transcript as an encrypted .PDF file directly to the DEED program officer.
- Do not send photos or certificates or awards. No materials will be returned.

Application Submission Address

Email your complete application to the DEED program officer: Bjørn Wolter (bjorn.wolter@alaska.gov). Make sure to put your name and program in the subject line. Have your registrar or principle send your official transcripts directly to the program officer in a separate email.

Official Alaska USSYP Student Application Form

Student Data

Name: _____ **Age:** _____ **Gender:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____

Email Address: _____

Preferred Phone: _____

Qualifying student government, civic, or educational position: _____

Class Standing: _____

Permanent U.S. Resident? _____

Parent/Guardian(s) Data

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____

Email Address: _____

Preferred Phone: _____

High School Data

School Name: _____

District: _____

Principal: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____

Email Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

Principal's signature: _____

As principal, I recommend this student as our school's nominee for the 2021-2021 United States Senate Youth Scholarship Program.

Nyche Andrew, AK - 2021

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

Quoted Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas of the famous poem *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost. In 8th grade, I vividly remember analyzing this very poem and thinking to myself how inapplicable it is to me. It was not until Justice Thomas recited it and I realized the meaning of the poem: that life is what you make of it. Throughout all of high school, I've kept my head down, my heart open, and followed my opportunities with excitement and passion. Because of this, I had the honor to be an Alaska delegate for the United States Senate Youth Program.

With Washington Week ONLINE, the focus was not centered around the marble beauty of D. C. architecture; the focus was, instead, taking what the speakers said and building something of it with that alone. In many ways, I am grateful for that. Throughout Washington Week I got to hear from remarkable speakers and though I may not remember exact quotes of what everyone said, I do remember the impression and life perspective they imparted.

Through Justice Thomas's time with us, I took away with me a new life perspective rather than interpretations and stances on past Supreme Court cases. He shared with us how unexpected his life turned out to be, how sometimes the most unimaginable journey is filled with the greatest reward. Justice Thomas showed a perfect emulation of the Robert Frost poem and helped me accept that so long as I am honest to myself, I will move through life and embrace the unexpected.

Another speaker I thoroughly enjoyed was Ms. Norah O'Donnell of CBS News. From her introduction, question response, and outro, she had me hooked at every single word she spoke. Ms. O'Donnell emulated thoughtfulness and power that commanded my attention. She inspired me to challenge how I present myself to groups of people; to challenge myself to be thoughtful and powerful. Hearing from a strong female was especially empowering, showing me that institutions headed by women can be and are revolutionary.

Lastly, I enjoyed hearing from was Senate Historian Dr. Betty Koed. Upon answering my question, she explained that every examination of history is a revision: we look with eyes wiser than before as we attempt to understand the action of our ancestors. Dr. Koed's time was especially interesting to me as one of my favorite subjects is history. I love history because we don't know the impact of current major events, how it will affect future worldly decisions, or even our own lives. We just hope that we move through it with resilience and grace.

The greatest legacy I will carry from this program are the fellow peers I met in persistence of time zones and location. From meeting on the late-night Zooms, Discord group chats, and Instagram— it feels as though I met these amazing minds in person without barriers, and for a moment, forgetting about the pandemic. The greatest gift my fellow delegates gave me was acceptance. Through land acknowledgments delegates gave in their roll call video and encouragement to share my perspective, I truly felt welcomed among a group who share this world and future with me.

Serving as an Alaska delegate for the United States Senate Youth Program 2021 has been one of my greatest honors as a high school student. I am extremely grateful for the generosity of the scholarship and accommodation to an online event. I may not know what roads and paths I'm yet to take, but I do know that being in this program will reveal less traveled by paths that are sure to spark adventure and blessing.

Sawyer Sands, AK –2021

In this essay, I am tasked to write a reflection about our wonderful speakers and experiences during Washington Week. I could write about the life advice given by Norah O'Donnell and the interview with those on the International Space Station that was, quite literally, out of this world. Alternatively, I might drone on for paragraphs about the one point every speaker agreed on: the inspiring fact they never imagined they would end up where they are now. Or, maybe it is best I focus on the various tours, music productions, and Military Mentors instead. Yet, I believe it would not be enough. Despite all the amazing opportunities I have been afforded, it is my firm belief the true value of the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) is still to come.

USSYP is known for its outstanding lineup of civil servants organized each year; however, it is much more than a Q&A session with people of import. After spending countless hours interacting virtually with my fellow delegates, I have come to an epiphany. The entire program is merely bait to bring together the most dynamic and diverse group of students our country has to offer. From the moment I first met another delegate, I was stunned by their knowledge about not only the country but also the politics of my home district out west in rural Alaska. Beyond the knowledge present within each individual, there are volumes to be spoken about the group's character as a whole. We were able to engage in passionate debate while maintaining our camaraderie, even if it sometimes took a day or two to remember.

After the events of Washington Week, which still seem more of a dream than reality, I cannot help but feel satisfied. Of course, there remains the disappointment I did not get to see Washington, D.C. in person and the myriad of lost opportunities. Nevertheless, I am grateful beyond measure to every force that provided me an opportunity unparalleled anywhere else, the Hearst Foundations foremost among them. Whether virtual or in person, I now know the experience of USSYP can bind even the most radically differentiated beliefs through the strong bonds of mutuality. I believe this quality of the program to be beholden to nothing, not even time itself.

As I sit here writing about what has been and what is, I would like to take a moment and express the true value of USSYP: what will be. One day, I may completely forget the political viewpoints shared by speakers whose names even now begin to haze within my mind. One day, the educational answers I absorbed so readily will blur and be consigned to oblivion in the recesses of memory. One day, the hours spent attentively on Zoom will feel as though they were only a figment of my imagination. Still, when every last remnant of USSYP has left me, I know I will have the companionship of each and every delegate that shared in my experience. A sentimental thought, to be sure, though one that is honest to its core.