



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Education
& Early Development**

DIVISION OF INNOVATION &
EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

333 Willoughby Ave., 9th Floor, SOB
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500
Main: 907.465.2800
Fax: 907.465.2806

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 64th 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.

The 64th annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week is being planned for **7-14 March 2026**. The entire week will be planned and coordinated by the Hearst Foundation. It will include many specific functions and events at national landmarks. This will be an amazing opportunity for students to access the halls of federal government and members of all three branches of government. It will be an extremely full week of site visits, speakers, and events, and personal free time will be limited. Applicants may wish to consider this when applying.

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.** Students must attend the entire program to receive the scholarship.

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. **Students may need to have a Real ID to access many federal sites.** Please keep this in mind.

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** 2025-2026 academic years (*Please reference the 2026 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.

This year's application is entirely online. Student complete the application via Google Forms [here](https://forms.gle/hCDWmTMWjhvZwPgE7) (<https://forms.gle/hCDWmTMWjhvZwPgE7>) and will upload required documents via the form. There is a detailed checklist of required submission items included on the form. Please use this checklist to ensure your application is complete. Incomplete applications will **not** be considered. Following this announcement is the 2026 brochure and an essay on the experience by one of last year's delegates.

The Alaska application deadline is **20 October 2025 at 5pm.**

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 2026 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,

Bjørn Wolter, Ph.D.
Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska, 99811-0500
907.465.6542 (p)
907.465.3240 (f)
bjorn.wolter@alaska.gov

Apply for the 2025-2026 United States Senate
Youth Program online at:

<https://forms.gle/atesSCfQ81KpE6Db7>

(You will need a Google affiliated email address. Most Alaskan
school district student accounts meet this requirement.)

Joshua Pak, AK – 2025

To say that Washington Week was the best week of my life would be an understatement.

No amount of eloquent diction, pictures, videos, sheets of frantically scribbled notes, or even nostalgic recollection could capture the effect that it had on me and the trajectory of my future. From the moment I arrived until the moment I left, the Senate Youth Program had me constantly transfixed by something greater than myself, whether that was from walking the coffered “Great Hall” of the Supreme Court building or listening to a speech from the Secretary of State, and it has left an indelible mark on who I am and who I aspire to be.

As I write this reflection in my home across the country in Alaska, I can’t help but notice how, in the same way my home keeps me insulated from the snow falling profusely outside, the distance between my state and D.C. seems to insulate me from the political bustle and important decisions to be made in our nation’s capital. However, by virtue of attending USSYP, this disconnect is rendered null. I still feel a profound connection to the pulse of our nation, the responsibilities of citizenship, and what’s at stake—just as much as I felt it in Washington Week. Every speaker, every tour, and every discussion gave evidence of an intangible force that has moved our country to great heights and is the cause for this clear connection to what I feel. By the end of the Washington Week, I was sure that this intangible force had to be the spirit of service that lies at the heart of our democracy.

The most profound takeaway from my time was the redefining of what public service truly means and looks like in America. It is a definition that is indubitably and regrettably overlooked by the media. I learned that what truly enables our country to not only prosper but also to lead the free world are the actions of public servants that never make headlines. Things that don’t feed the polarization machine. After witnessing it for myself, I truly wish that every American could see for themselves the tireless commitment, servitude, and care of our public servants because they hold the fabric of our government together.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the independence of our great nation, the quote from Sergeant Major Black rings timely and has affirmed for me a truth that I believe is as alive and relevant as our nation’s history: “If not you, then who? And if not you, don’t complain much.” America’s success in becoming a “more perfect union” in an imperfect world and the longevity of our nation are incumbent on us. However, I do not worry. In the uncertain debate for our future, Washington Week has given me 103 compelling, tenacious, and daring reasons to believe that America is in good hands.

To future delegates of the United States Senate Youth Program,

After having gone through the week myself, I realized that every aspect of the Senate Youth Program had been meticulously designed to show me why politics has mattered, why it matters now, and why it will continue to matter. I believe Senator Klobuchar’s comment captures this sentiment perfectly: “Politics should be about improving people’s lives, not dividing them.” Service before self, people before power, and solutions before problems are among the values that Washington Week has emphasized, and as long as they are upheld, public service will continue to be a “noble and worthy calling,” as stated by Senate Parliamentarian MacDonough.

Future delegates, look beyond the prestige and arrive with a curious attitude, an eager and open mind, and a compassionate soul. Jot everything down, soak every moment, and meet and talk to as many people as you can. Do not miss a second of it because it can and will change your life.

I will be forever grateful for the lessons, friendships, and purpose that the Senate Youth Program has afforded me. It’s given me an experience that has no price but to which I am forever indebted. So, it is my deepest hope that my service—whether military, public, or community service—will be how I pay it forward.

UNITED STATES SENATE ★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT

64TH ANNUAL WASHINGTON WEEK • MARCH 7-14, 2026



THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS • [USSENATEYOUTH.ORG](https://usenateyouth.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 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) — for an intensive week-long education and leadership program. 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 64th 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 6,300, USSYP alumni serve the country in many ways. They have become leaders in government, law, business, education, journalism, the military, medicine, healthcare, higher education and many other fields. Alumni serve as elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, including members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, 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 their success is the desire to serve.

THE PROGRAM

The 64th Annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week will be held March 7–14, 2026 in Washington, D.C.

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. The Department of Defense (DoD) annually provides a team of competitively selected 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 the 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, 2025.

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 and school counselors or 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: ussenateyouth.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 2025–2026 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 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 2025–2026 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 2025 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 2025–2026 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 have 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 2025–2026 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 (by a panel, commission or board) to a local, state, regional or national-level civic or educational

organization approved by the state selection administrator, where the student holds a high-level, year-round leadership position representing a constituency and/or providing service to others.

2. Member or 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, or Junior State conferences
- 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 a sports team (Commander or Squadron Leader of a JROTC WILL qualify)
- An internship or job, or 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 benefit.

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.**
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 THAT 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 THE PROGRAM WEEK.**

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

ARRIVAL D.C.: Saturday, March 7, between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM

DEPARTURE D.C.: Saturday, March 14, 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, 2025**, the names of the two delegates and two alternates. Upon confirmation of qualifications, the program requires each delegate to submit a statement of participation including a code of conduct agreement to be signed by students and parents/legal guardians. All program rules apply to the group as a whole, defined as minors.
4. **Code of Conduct:** Delegates will be the guests of the United States Senate and The Hearst Foundations throughout the program 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. Cyberbullying and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Delegates must comply with all program health and safety policies.
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 Washington Week. Parents are not allowed to chaperone their child, and roommates are designated by the program. 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 on the student's behalf. No funds may be given directly to a student or family. 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 student 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.



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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, unanimously approved by the United States 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 cooperated 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 offices 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 representative 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

90 NEW MONTGOMERY STREET • SUITE 1212 • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105-4504 • 415.908.4540 • 800.425.3632 • (F) 415.243.0760 • USSYP@HEARSTFDN.ORG