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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Two Students Named to U.S. Senate Youth Program

Samuel Kurland, a junior at Juneau-Douglas High School, and Michael Tappel, a junior at Holy Rosary Academy in Anchorage, have been named Alaska's delegates to the United States Senate Youth Program, Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley announced today.

Named as first alternate is Gates Failing, a senior at Ketchikan High School; the second alternate is Trevor Woodhouse, a senior at Anchorage Christian School.

Since 1962 the U.S. Senate Youth Program has provided opportunities for academically talented young people with demonstrated leadership abilities to deepen their understanding of America's political process. Participating students are selected for their academic excellence, leadership abilities, and commitment to public service.

"I congratulate Alaska's delegates and alternates to the prestigious United States Senate Youth Program. It was difficult to choose from among so many talented and engaged students," said Commissioner Hanley. "They represent the many students who strive to make their schools and communities better places."

Two student delegates from each state, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense schools will participate in an intensive week-long educational program in Washington, D.C., in March. Students will hear policy addresses from senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and Defense, and directors of federal agencies. Students will meet a Supreme Court justice. Members of the military serve as mentors.

In addition, each student receives a \$5,000 scholarship. The program, including all expenses for Washington Week, is funded by the Hearst Foundation.

Samuel Kurland serves as Associated Student Body president, as a youth advocate to the Juneau Youth Court, and as Editor in Chief of a student newspaper. He is a member of the National Honor Society, participating in community service functions. He served

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as the student representative to the Juneau Board of Education, interned for State Rep. Beth Kerttula, and served as the Senior Boy Scout Patrol Leader, coordinating the troop's community service projects.

Michael Tappel is Head Boy at his school, Archdiocesan Youth Representative, and Student Ambassador to represent youth's vision to the Archdiocese of Anchorage's Faith and Development Council. He is the school's Head Cantor and performs at community events. He volunteers at hospitals by reading to sick children, serves meals at homeless shelters, and entertains residents at retirement homes. Tappel intends to establish a school debate team and newspaper.

Gates Failing serves as vice president of the Student Body Association. He is the Class Act Mentor for incoming freshman. He helped establish a Philosophy Club and Robotics Club. Failing received the Advanced Placement U.S. History Student of the Year Award. He is a National Merit Scholar and was selected as a national participant in the Leadership through Learning program. He is president of the Rotary Interact Club, undertaking community service and fundraising projects to benefit local and international groups.

Trevor Woodhouse serves as senior class president and president of the Anchorage Christian Schools National Honor Society. Through these leadership positions, Trevor has organized food drives, assisting in the Anchorage Special Olympics program and the Operation Christmas Child collection facility. He helped jumpstart and coach the first Lego League robotics program. Trevor is involved in the Stanford Education Program for Gifted Youth and has been nominated as a National Merit Scholar.

Alaska students interested in applying for the 2013 program should see www.ussenateyouth.org. Applications are generally available in early September.

For more information, contact Program Coordinator Shari Paul at 465-6535 or shari.paul@alaska.gov.

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