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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Alaska Students Named to U.S. Senate Youth Program

JUNEAU – Lucas Arthur, a student at Mat-Su Career & Technical High School in the Mat-Su Borough School District, and Kiera O'Brien, a student at Ketchikan High School in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, have been named Alaska's delegates to the United States Senate Youth Program by Alaska Education Commissioner Mike Hanley.

States also name alternate delegates, who serve if their primary delegates cannot attend Washington Week. Alaska's first alternate is Derek Dzinich, a student at Juneau-Douglas High School in the Juneau School District. The second alternate is Savannah Rizzo, a student at Nikiski High School in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

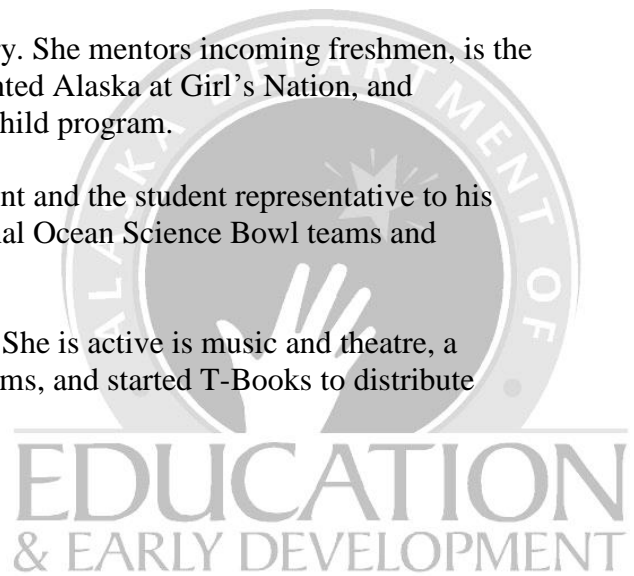
"It was difficult to choose from so many deserving applicants," Commissioner Hanley said "The applicants represent the many Alaska students who serve their school and community while maintaining high academic achievement. Our delegates are a credit to Alaska's schools and families."

Mr. Arthur serves as his school's student body president. He is a two-time state Science Olympiad champion, a state Tsunami Bowl champion, and a National Science Bowl competitor. He is recipient of his school's Spirit of Youth award.

Ms. O'Brien is her school's senior class secretary. She mentors incoming freshmen, is the student director of her school pep band, represented Alaska at Girl's Nation, and coordinates her church's Operation Christmas Child program.

Mr. Dzinich is his school's student body president and the student representative to his local school board. He has captained two National Ocean Science Bowl teams and competed in two international science fairs.

Ms. Rizzo is her school's junior class president. She is active in music and theatre, a member of her school's debate and forensics teams, and started T-Books to distribute books to underprivileged children.



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.

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 funded by the Hearst Foundations. It is intended to foster careers in public service.

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. Also see www.ussenateyouth.org

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