

March 9th, 2020

Earlier last week, the delegates of the 58th Annual United States Senate Youth Program were notified that our week-long reception in Washington D.C. from March 7-14 was cancelled due to COVID-19, less than thirty-six hours before flight departure and less than six days before we were all scheduled to meet with our respective United States Senators. I am the 2020 senior delegate from the State of Indiana.

The announcement that Washington Week will not go on as scheduled - only the second cancellation in the program's nearly sixty year history - is disheartening to me. Anyone familiar with the USSYP, after all, knows that this is the cancellation of a fellowship with an unparalleled knack at producing public servants. Fellow alumni of the United States Senate Youth Program include current Senators Susan Collins (ME-1971) & Cory Gardner (CO-1993), former Governor Chris Christie (NJ-1980), & former Mayor Pete Buttigieg (fellow IN-2000 & fellow Harvard '04!).

As someone deeply interested in the workings of our nation's government, I first pursued the USSYP fellowship as a high school junior (18-19), during my first year of eligibility. I turned down a free opportunity to study-abroad in Thailand so that I could stay in the United States & retain program eligibility. Although I didn't even earn a finalist invitation to the 2019 fellowship, I decided to forgo initial plans for junior-year graduation in large part to re-apply for the USSYP as a high school senior (19-20). I will never forget how excited I was on the day I received a phone call from the Indiana Bar Foundation notifying me of my selection to the Hoosier State's 58th annual USSYP delegation!

What follows after this year's USSYP cancellation is unclear, especially given that COVID-19 remains a developing situation. No matter what happens next, though, I want to say a few words today.

First, to the Indiana Bar Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, & to the United States Senate: Thank you for your continued support of the most prestigious honor available to secondary-education students interested in public service. I'm deeply humbled that you chose me to serve as your 2020 delegate from the State of Indiana!

Second, to my Teachers, Mentors & Friends: Many of you know that a selection to the USSYP has been my dream for years. Some of you helped me study for the fellowship's formal civics examination, while others helped me prepare strong written & oral statements in support of my selection to the program. More importantly, though, all of you believed (& continue to believe) in my potential as a civil servant. I'm so grateful for your support; I wouldn't have been selected as a USSYP fellow without it!

Finally, to my Fellow Delegates: Collectively, you represent the Fifty States, the District of Columbia, & the Department of Defense Education Activity. Many of us connected through social media prior to the official USSYP reception, so it hurts to know that I won't get to meet you on the footsteps of Capitol Hill this week. However, I'm sure that many opportunities for reunion in the future will arise given enough time. Besides, I know that one day I'll have the honor of personally supporting all one hundred & three of you in your inevitable runs for the office of the House, the office of the Senate, and (because let's be honest, some of you are bold enough to do it) the office of President of the United States!

Thank you again to everyone involved in this fellowship! It has been an honor.

Aldo D. Medina

Delegate to the United States Senate Youth Program (IN-2020)



Justice Thurgood Marshall discusses the judicial branch with the USSYP class of 1977. His successor, Justice Clarence Thomas, was scheduled to meet with my class this year.

Sitting U.S. Presidents meet with the U.S. Senate Youth Program each year in a tradition that goes all the way back to 1962 when President Kennedy welcomed the first class of delegates to the White House. Here, President Gerald Ford greets the USSYP class of 1975.



House Speaker Carl Albert speaks with the two Oklahoma delegates from the USSYP class of 1971. The student on the far right, Robert Henry, was appointed to the Tenth Circuit nearly a quarter century later.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:
Tim Kalgreen, M.Ed. at tkalgreen@inbf.org or (317) 608-6503.

For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program:
Program Director Ms. Rayne Guilford (800) 425-3632 or rguilford@hearstfdn.org.

Indiana Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program ***Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship***

January 9, 2020, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Eilidh Jessie MacLeod and Mr. Aldo Daniel Medina will join Senator Todd Young and Senator Mike Braun in representing Indiana in the nation's capital during the 58th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 7 — 14, 2020. Eilidh MacLeod of Evansville and Aldo Medina of Indianapolis were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation who will also each receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study.

The USSYP was created by Senate Resolution 324 in 1962 and has been sponsored by the Senate and fully funded by The Hearst Foundations since inception. Originally proposed by Senators Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey, the impetus for the program as stated in Senate testimony is "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 brings the most outstanding high school students - two from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity - to Washington, D.C. for an intensive week-long study of the federal government and the people who lead it. The overall mission of the program is to help instill within each class of USSYP student delegates more profound knowledge of the American political process and a lifelong commitment to public service. In addition to the program week, The Hearst Foundations provide each student with a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs. Transportation and all expenses for Washington Week are also provided by The Hearst Foundations; as stipulated in S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

Eilidh MacLeod, a junior at the Signature School, serves as the secretary of the Student Council. She is a member of the Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council, a member of the city of Evansville's Teen Advisory Council, co-president of the school's Government Club, and co-chair of the local Teen Court. She is currently pursuing an International Baccalaureate diploma. In the future, Eilidh plans to attend law school and specialize in public policy and political speech writing.

Aldo Medina, a senior at Arsenal Technical High School, serves as the chairman of the Indiana Youth Legislative Advisory Council. As chairman, he prepares reports to the Indiana General Assembly and represents the Council in official meetings with state legislators and state agencies. He is the first Indianapolis Public Schools delegate selected since 1975 and serves as a voice for teachers and peers as a member of the district superintendent's Youth Advisory Team. After graduating as valedictorian, Aldo will attend Harvard College to study government as one of just four Indiana students admitted this year through the university's Early Action program.

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UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

2020 Indiana Delegate Announcement
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page -2-

Chosen as alternates to the 2020 program were Mr. David Wolfe Bender, a resident of Indianapolis, who attends the Park Tudor School and Ms. Isabella Michele Pastore, also a resident of Indianapolis, who attends North Central 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 Indiana delegates and alternates were designated by Jennifer McCormick, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

While in Washington the student delegates attend meetings and briefings with senators, members of the House of Representatives, Congressional staff, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, an ambassador to the United States and senior members of the national media.

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 5,700 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; 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; former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first alumna to be elected governor; former Chief Judge Robert Henry, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit; former Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt, former presidential advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove, and Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana currently a candidate for president of the United States. Additional notables include former Lt. Governor of Idaho David Leroy, Provost of Wake Forest University Rogan Kersh, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and other university educators.

For more information please visit: www.ussenateyouth.org
