



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:  
Dr. Tamara Shreiner at Shreinet@gvsu.edu or (616) 331-8568.

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

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

**January 16, 2019, Washington, D.C.** —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Mr. Luke Patrick Koenigsknecht and Ms. Serena Jayne Smith will join Senator Debbie Stabenow and Senator Gary Peters in representing Michigan in the nation's capital during the 57<sup>th</sup> annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 2 — 9, 2019. Luke Koenigsknecht of Grand Rapids and Serena Smith of Ypsilanti 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.

Luke Koenigsknecht, a senior at West Michigan Aviation Academy, serves as the president of the National Honor Society, founder of and a representative on its CEO Advisory Council, and is a cross country runner. He was lead volunteer for the Leaders of Tomorrow gala and a representative to the dedication of the President Gerald R. Ford Memorial Exhibit. Luke has volunteered at local soup kitchens and nursing homes, and is an academic tutor. He was a winner of the Economic Club of Grand Rapids essay contest two years in a row, and has received academic awards for both English and Spanish.

Serena Smith, a senior at Washtenaw International High School, serves as the president of the National Honor Society and the treasurer of the Hispanic Honor Society. She has received a varsity letter for community service, spending most of her time as a volunteer tutor, including for English second language learners, and has also volunteered her time to youth advocacy, and education about sexual health. Serena has been recognized Summa Cum Laude each year of high school, and received awards as Distinguished Spanish Student and Distinguished Global Politics Student.

(more)

## **UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM**

2019 Michigan Delegate Announcement  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page -2-

Chosen as alternates to the 2019 program were Ms. Chloe Pike, a resident of Clinton, who attends Clinton High School and Ms. Kylie Chicilli, a resident of Clare, who attends Clare 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 Michigan delegates and alternates were designated by Ms. Sheila Alles, Interim State Superintendent.

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. The students will also tour many of the national monuments and several museums and they will stay at the historic Mayflower Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C.

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, and former presidential advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. 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.

Members of the bipartisan U. S. Senate Youth Program 2019 Senate Advisory Committee: Senator Joni K. Ernst of Iowa, Republican Co-Chair; Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Democratic Co-Chair; Advisory Members: Susan M. Collins (R-ME), Steve Daines (R-MT), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), John Kennedy (R-LA), Michael F. Bennet (D-CO), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD). Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders.

**For more information please visit: [www.ussenateyouth.org](http://www.ussenateyouth.org)**

\*\*\*