



For Immediate Release

Contact: For questions about your state's delegates, alternates or selection process, please contact your state selection administrator: Dr. Elisabeth Egetemeyr at elisabeth.egetemeyr@nysed.gov or 518-474-5922. For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program, please contact Program Director Rayne Guilford at 800-425-3632 or rquilford@hearstfdn.org. Also see www.usenateyouth.org.

New York Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program **--Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$5,000 Scholarship--**

January 11, 2016, Washington, D.C. -- Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand today announced the names of the two students who have been selected as delegates to the 54th annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) that will be held March 5 – 12, 2016 in Washington, D.C. Benjamin Sorkin of Staten Island and Liana Van Nostrand of New York were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 54th annual Washington Week.

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 104 of 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 \$5,000 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.

Benjamin Sorkin attends Staten Island Technical High School and serves as the executive vice president of the Student Organization. He has served on the Borough Student Advisory Council and is the founder of the Film Festival Club at Staten Island Technical High School. He tutors middle school students and supervises the school's summer programs. Ben is an avid performing arts student and film aficionado, performing on stage and hosting student-made films. He is also a National Honor Society member and Questbridge National College Match finalist.

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**UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM
2016 Delegate Announcement**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAGE -2-

Liana Van Nostrand attends Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) in Manhattan, where she serves as a representative to the Students Union. She is the chief of staff of the High School Democrats of America. Having won numerous Model UN awards, she leads the team as secretary general. Liana, editor-in-chief of her school newspaper, also peer-tutors at BHSEC's Writing Center. She will graduate with an AA degree in June 2016 and then matriculate at Yale University, where she plans to study politics.

Chosen as alternates to the 2016 program were Julian Ubriaco, a resident of Northport, who attends Kings Park High School and Jacob Zeitlin, a resident of Rye Brook, who attends Blind Brook High School.

The chief educational officer in each state selects the delegates after nomination by teachers and principals. This year's delegates were designated by Ms. MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner of Education.

While in Washington the student delegates attend meetings and briefings with Senators, House Representatives and 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 exceptional leadership abilities and a strong commitment to volunteer work, the student delegates generally rank academically in the top one percent of their states among high school juniors and seniors. Now more than 5,000 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 alumnus to be elected U.S. Senator and the first to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first alumnus 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, former president of the Progressive Policy Institute Robert Shapiro, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

Members of the USSYP 2016 54th annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado, Republican Co-Chair; Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, Democratic Co-Chair; Senate Advisory Members: Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Michael B. Enzi (R-WY), David Perdue (R-GA), Tim Scott (R-SC), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Robert P. Casey (D-PA), Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT). Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the Vice President of the United States and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders.
