

## **TWO NEBRASKA STUDENTS SELECTED FOR U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM, RECEIVE \$5,000 SCHOLARSHIPS**

Joshua Harnisch of Papillion and Mica Spicka of Fremont have been selected to be among the 104 students attending the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual U.S. Senate Youth Program and \$5,000 college scholarships.

Sens. Ben Nelson and Mike Johanns today announced the names of the two Nebraska students who will attend the event March 7 – 14 in Washington, D.C.

Joshua Harnisch is senior class secretary at Papillion-LaVista South High School. He is a six-time varsity letterman and takes part in National Honor Society and Government Club. He volunteers with Hagenau Memorial Foundation, Habitat for Humanity and Read Across America. Joshua plans to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy after graduation and to pursue a career in aeronautical engineering.

Mica Spicka is student council representative at Duchesne Academy. Mica participates in several clubs including social justice, computers for Africa, SADD, National Honors Society, environment and anti-discrimination. Mica also enjoys drama, volunteering, and yoga. Hobbies include performing arts, travel, politics, documentaries, foreign films and the symphony. She plans to study political science, international relations, journalism or the arts.

Alternates are Luke Hawbaker who attends Omaha Central High School and Abby Walker of Valley. Abby attends Douglas County West Schools.

Delegates are nominated by their teachers and principals and designated delegates by Marge Harouff, Nebraska deputy education commissioner, the state's chief education officer.

The USSYP was created in 1962 and is sponsored by the Senate. The program is funded by The Hearst Foundations. The program was established "to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world."

Each year this competitive, merit-based program brings two students 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 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, the foundation grants each of the 104 student delegates a \$5,000 college scholarship to encourage continued study and coursework in government, history and public affairs. Transportation and expenses for Washington Week are provided by the foundation. Government funds are not used to support the program.

While in Washington, student delegates will attend meetings and briefings with Senate leadership, other Senators and Congressional staff; the President, a Justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, an Ambassador to the United States and top members of the national media. Students will also tour many of the national monuments and several museums and stay at the historic Mayflower hotel in downtown Washington, D.C.

In addition to outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to public service, this year's students rank academically in the top one percent of their states. They continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. Among the many distinguished former program delegates are Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, the first program delegate elected to the Senate; Chief Judge Robert Henry, U.S. Court of Appeals; former Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt; former Presidential Advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional distinguished alumni are former Lt. Gov. David LeRoy of Idaho, New Jersey U.S. Attorney Christopher Christie, military officers, Foreign Service Officers, members of state Legislatures, top Congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

Members of the USSYP 2009 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Senate Advisory Committee are co-chairs: Sen. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware and Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. Advisory Committee: Sen. Christopher J. Dodd of Connecticut, Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, Sen. John B. Ensign of Nevada, Sen. Richard G. Lugar of Indiana and Sen. Mel Martinez of Florida.