



## NEWS RELEASE

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Editors' note: This is a U.S. Senate, Youth Program, news release. For more information contact Harris Payne at (402) 471-2449 or [harris.payne@nebraska.gov](mailto:harris.payne@nebraska.gov) or the U.S. Senate Youth Program Director Rayne Guilford at 800-425-3632 or [rguilford@hearstfdn.org](mailto:rguilford@hearstfdn.org). Also see [www.ussenateyouth.org](http://www.ussenateyouth.org).

# NEBRASKA STUDENTS SELECTED FOR U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

- **Students headed to Washington, D. C. and to receive \$5,000 scholarship**

Senators Mike Johanns and Deb Fischer today announced the names of the two Nebraska students who have been selected as delegates to the 52nd annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) that will be held March 8 – 15, 2014 in Washington, D.C.

Robert Larsen of Papillion and Joseph Zach of Omaha were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 52nd 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 was "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 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 of the 104 student delegates 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.

Robert "Bobby" Larsen attends Papillion-LaVista South High School and serves as the Student Council vice president. Bobby is clarinet section leader in his school's marching band, a pianist in a jazz band,

class treasurer, speech captain, newspaper copy chief, and a member of the National Honor Society. Additionally, he serves as the public relations chair for the Papillion Mayors' Youth Leadership Council. He attended Cornhusker Boys' State in 2013, and is a lector at church. He likes to travel and plans to study history and political science.

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Joseph Zach attends Skutt Catholic High School and serves as a member of the Student Council. He is involved in Future Business Leaders of America and the National Honor Society. He plans on studying political science, economics or finance in college. He likes spending his time playing football and serving the community.

Chosen as alternates to the 2014 program were Paul Weber, a resident of Cedar Bluffs, who attends Cedar Bluffs High School and Julie Slama, a resident of Peru, who attends Auburn 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 Mr. Scott Swisher, Deputy Commissioner of Education.

While in Washington the student delegates will attend meetings and briefings with 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. 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 5,000 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 delegate to be elected U.S. Senator; New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first delegate to be elected governor; Congressman Cory Gardner, the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; 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 2014 52nd annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Co-Chairs: Senator Jon Tester of Montana and Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee; Advisory Committee: Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Senator Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, Senator Patty Murray of Washington, Senator Tom Udall of New Mexico, Senator Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, Senator John Hoeven of North Dakota, Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama and Senator David Vitter of Louisiana. Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the Vice President of the United States and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders.

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