



NEWS RELEASE

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Nebraska Students Selected For U. S. Senate Youth Program

Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$5,000 Scholarship

January 11, 2016, Washington, D.C. -- Senators Deb Fischer and Ben Sasse 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. Sean Lynch II of Omaha and Paige Wergin of Aurora 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.

Sean Lynch II attends Skutt Catholic and serves as the inaugural president of the National English Honor Society (NEHS) which promotes literary events at Skutt Catholic and in the broader community as well. Two activities he has focused on during all four years of high school have been Mock Trial

and Forensics as well as writing and playing the violin. Sean is aiming to pursue a career in writing but is also considering becoming a lawyer, specifically working in civil rights law.

Paige Wergin attends Aurora High School and has served as a Student Council representative during all four years of high school. She is president of her Future Business Leaders of America chapter, treasurer of her National Honor Society chapter, and drum major for the marching band. She is active in her church, 4-H, the Aurora High School Leadership Academy and is an elementary environmental education camp peer leader. Her plans for the future are to attend a four year college, possibly Nebraska Wesleyan University with a double major in English and communications and a minor in Spanish.

Chosen as alternates to the 2016 program were Tyler Timm, a resident of Ithaca, who attends Wahoo High School and Cameron Azimi, a resident of Lincoln, who attends Lincoln Southwest 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 Dr. Matthew Blomstedt, 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.
