



For Immediate Release

Contact: For questions about your state's delegates, alternates or selection process, please contact your state selection administrator: Ms. Christonya B. Brown at Christonya.Brown@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 225-2893.

For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program, please contact Program Director Rayne Guilford at (800) 425-3632 or rguilford@hearstfdn.org. Also see www.usenateyouth.org.

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

January 11, 2017, Washington, D.C. — Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine today announced the names of the two students who have been selected as delegates to the 55th annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) that will be held March 4 — 11, 2017 in Washington, D.C. Mr. Mazzen Samer Shalaby of Fredericksburg and Ms. Erin Brooke Sullivan of Abingdon were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 55th 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 \$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.

Mazzen Shalaby attends North Stafford High School and serves as the vice president of his school's National Honor Society. Mazzen is also the vice president the Future Business Leaders of America chapter at his school. He is captain of the varsity golf and debate teams and serves on the Commonwealth's Governor's School Advisory Board. He volunteers with Special Olympics, Big Brothers, and the Islamic Center of Fredericksburg. In 2016, Mazzen won the Conference 15 Golf Championship, the National AP Scholar award, and the American Legion Post 290 Oratorical Competition. Mazzen hopes to major in public policy at Princeton and aspires to serve as an elected official.

Erin Sullivan attends Abingdon High School and serves as the Senior Class president. Erin also serves as the National Technology Student Association secretary and the treasurer of the Student Council Association. She has formerly served as Virginia Technology Student Association president, Junior Class vice president, Sophomore Class treasurer, and Freshman Class vice president. She hopes to graduate valedictorian and attend the University of Alabama to major in chemistry and political science. Erin plans to become a medical examiner and then enter politics.

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Chosen as alternates to the 2017 program were Sophia McCrimmon, a resident of Mechanicsville, who attends Maggie L. Walker Governor's School and Hannah Richards, a resident of Chilhowie, who attends Chilhowie 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 Virginia delegates and alternates were designated by Dr. Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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 5,500 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 to the Senate; Senator Cory Gardner, the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the second to be elected to the Senate; 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 Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie, 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 U. S. Senate Youth Program 2017 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Roger F. Wicker of Mississippi, Republican Co-Chair; Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Democratic Co-Chair; Bipartisan Senate Advisory Members: Senators Bill Cassidy MD (R-LA), Joni K. Ernst (R-IA), James M. Inhofe (R-OK), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Christopher S. Murphy (D-CT) and Jon Tester (D-MT). Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders.
