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New Mexico Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program
Students to Participate in Online Program and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship

January 11, 2022, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Yunseo Kim and Ms. Micah Renee Lightfoot will join Senator Martin Heinrich and Senator Ben Ray Luján in representing New Mexico during the 60th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 6 — 9, 2022. Yunseo Kim of Los Alamos and Micah Lightfoot of Tucumcari were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation who will each also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the 2022 program will be held online, through a comprehensive and highly interactive virtual education and leadership forum.

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 Senate leadership of the day, 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 provides the most outstanding high school students - two from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity - with 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. All expenses for Washington Week are also provided by The Hearst Foundations; as stipulated in S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

Yunseo Kim, a junior at Los Alamos High School, serves as a student representative with the Los Alamos Public Schools Foundation. As the current president of the local Rotary Interact Club, she has led food and clothing drives to support populations experiencing food insecurity within New Mexico. She is a captain of the Speech and Debate team and has competed twice at Nationals on topics of social justice. In addition, she is an officer for the peer helping program Natural Helpers, the Key Club historian, and a member of the National Honor Society. Yunseo was selected to attend the 2021 Model International Criminal Court and took the role of a presiding judge, which has furthered her interest in international relations and human rights as she wishes to one day work for the United Nations.

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Micah Lightfoot, a senior at Logan High School, serves as the president of the Student Body. She is a member of Future Farmers of America (FFA), Student Council, and National Honor Society. She has found time to participate in many community service activities in all of these clubs as well as with her church. In FFA, she currently holds the office of chapter president, District II vice president and New Mexico state officer finalist. Micah is also her senior class president. In addition, she has also been awarded many New Mexico State FFA Public Speaking champion titles, and is recognized in her community for her service to others through her engagement in community service through school programs and independently sought opportunities.

Chosen as alternates to the 2022 program were Ms. Cadence Ann Gonzales, a resident of Santa Fe, who attends the Academy for Technology and the Classics and Mr. James Leo Vanhille, a resident of Albuquerque, who attends La Cueva 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 New Mexico delegates and alternates were designated by Kurt Steinhaus, Secretary of Education.

During the program week, the student delegates will attend online meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, among others.

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 6,000 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 alumnus to be elected U.S. senator; Secretary of Transportation and former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, Pete Buttigieg; former 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; former 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, former presidential advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional notables include former Lt. Governor of Idaho David Leroy, Provost of Wake Forest University Rogan Kersh, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and other university educators.

Members of the U. S. Senate Youth Program 2022 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Christopher A. Coons of Delaware, Democratic Co-Chair; Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine, Republican Co-Chair; Advisory Members: Senator Ben Ray Luján (D-NM); Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley (D-OR); Senator Tina Smith (D-MN); Senator Mark R. Warner (D-VA); Senator Mike Braun (R-IN); Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV); Senator James M. Inhofe (R-OK); and Senator M. Michael Rounds (R-SD). Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders.

For more information please visit: www.ussenateyouth.org
