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**Contact:** Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:  
Mrs. Melissa Starkey at [melissa.starkey@arkansas.gov](mailto:melissa.starkey@arkansas.gov) or (501) 682-6584.

For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program:  
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**Arkansas Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program**  
***Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship***

**January 9, 2020, Washington, D.C.** —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Muskaan Arshad and Ms. Hue Anh Cao will join Senator John Boozman and Senator Tom Cotton in representing Arkansas in the nation's capital during the 58th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 7 — 14, 2020. Muskaan Arshad of Centerton and Hue Anh Cao of Bentonville were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation who will also each receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study.

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 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.

Muskaan Arshad, a junior at Bentonville West High School, serves as the state chair of the Asian American Caucus of the Young Democrats, the state vice chair for the Young Democrats' Women's Caucus, and an intern for a national Congressional campaign. She is also active in theatrical and musical pursuits, qualifying for the International Thespian Festival for acting and participating in one of her school's top choirs. Her literary and research works have been internationally published. She is a head delegate for Model UN, and a member of her school's debate team. Her volunteer activities include raising awareness and educating others on the importance of equality and justice by writing for an international nonprofit. Muskaan plans to major in socio-cultural anthropology and attend Harvard Law School.

Anh Cao, a senior at Bentonville High School, serves as the state director of BackPAC, the nation's largest student-run political action committee. BackPAC works to engage students in politics from a nonpartisan perspective. She is a captain of the U.S. National Debate team, and she placed the highest of any female participant in the July 2019 world debate championship in Thailand. Anh is the co-director of Project Dialogue, a nonprofit that teaches debate to children from underrepresented communities. She is the president of her school's Young Democrats, a member of the French Honor Society, and a National Merit Semifinalist. Volunteer activities include teaching English to non-native speakers and canvassing for state campaigns. She plans to study public health and ethnic studies with the goal of becoming a doctor.

(more)

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Chosen as alternates to the 2020 program were Ms. Emilee Elizabeth Webb, a resident of Poyen, who attends Poyen High School and Ms. Priya Thelapurath, a resident of Centerton, who attends Bentonville West 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 Arkansas delegates and alternates were designated by Johnny Key, Secretary of Education.

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.

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 5,700 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 alumna 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 alumna 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, and Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana currently a candidate for president of the United States. 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.

**For more information please visit: [www.ussenateyouth.org](http://www.ussenateyouth.org)**

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