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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 09, 2024, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Mr. Joshua Ofodile and Mr. Bannon Sansom Price will join Senator John Boozman and Senator Tom Cotton in representing Arkansas during the 62nd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 2 — 9, 2024. Joshua Ofodile of Fayetteville and Bannon Price of Ashdown were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation. Each delegate will also 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 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 Senate Resolution 324, no government funds are utilized.

Joshua Ofodile, a senior at Haas Hall Academy, serves as the vice president of the Student Council. He was named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, a United States Presidential Scholar candidate, and an AP Scholar with Distinction. He has served as a United States Senate Page and as a delegate to Arkansas Boys State. He is currently the treasurer for the National Honor Society and Beta Club. Joshua also served as the treasurer and is now vice president of his school's Future Business Leaders of America chapter. He is the captain of his school's Arkansas Economics Challenge, Varsity Quiz Bowl, varsity tennis, and varsity basketball teams. Joshua intends to pursue studies in political science and government while in college. He aspires to develop solutions to world problems in which conflict exists and hopes to serve in an elected capacity, endeavoring to bring a positive impact to his community.

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Bannon Price, a senior at Ashdown High School, serves as the vice president of the Student Council and president of the National Honor Society. He was named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist and AP Scholar. He has received the Presidential Service Award and has served as a delegate to Arkansas Boys State. Bannon is currently the chapter president of Future Business Leaders of America, Beta Club, and SkillsUSA. He also serves as the state president of Arkansas SkillsUSA. He is a tutor with the Ashdown High School of Innovation Peer Tutoring Program, a member of the Ashdown High School Student Voice and Leadership Committee, and a youth ambassador for the National Foundation for Cancer Research. He is the youth governor of Arkansas through the YMCA Youth and Government program, and previously served as a member of Senator John Boozman's Congressional Youth Cabinet, representing the 4th Congressional district of Arkansas. In addition to these roles, Bannon founded the Arkansas Initiative for Change, a youth-led political advocacy organization focused on empowering and supporting changemakers in his state and increasing civic engagement in young people. After graduating from high school, he intends to pursue studies in political science and public health and hopes to develop, advocate for, and implement public policies for every citizen by serving in an elected capacity.

Chosen as alternates to the 2024 program were Ms. Claire Elizabeth Hudnell, a resident of Hot Springs, who attends Lakeside High School and Ms. Nora Sirila Shitandi, a resident of Springdale, who attends Har-Ber 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 Jacob Oliva, Commissioner of Education.

During the program week, the student delegates will attend meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, and 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 6,100 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, the first alumnus to be appointed as a cabinet secretary; 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 and former presidential advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional notables include former Lt. Governor of Idaho David Leroy, former 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 2024 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada, the 2024 USSYP Democratic Co-Chair and Senator John Barrasso, M.D. of Wyoming, the 2024 USSYP Republican Co-Chair. The full USSYP Senate Advisory Committee consists of the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders who annually serve as the program's Honorary Co-Chairs; two senators, one from each party, serving as acting Co-Chairs who each have keynote speaking roles, and an eight-member bipartisan Senate panel, four senators from each party, who lend their names in support. Serving on the Advisory Committee for the upcoming program are: Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, Senator Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, Senator Edward J. Markey of Massachusetts, Senator Alex Padilla of California, Senator John Boozman of Arkansas, Senator Katie Britt of Alabama, Senator John Hoeven of North Dakota and Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina.

For more information please visit: www.ussenateyouth.org

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