



# Arkansas Department of Education

## Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jacob Oliva, Secretary

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Kaelin Clay

PHONE: [\(501\) 442-6977](tel:(501)442-6977)

Email: [kaelin.clay@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:kaelin.clay@ade.arkansas.gov)

CONTACT: Wendy Wilk

Email: [USSYP@hearstfdn.org](mailto:USSYP@hearstfdn.org)

### Arkansas Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program

*Students headed to Washington, D.C. and to receive \$10,000 college scholarship*

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** – The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) is pleased to announce that high school students Ms. Manvitha Narasimhan and Mr. Eric Tang will join Senator John Boozman and Senator Tom Cotton in representing Arkansas during the 64th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 7-14, 2026.

**Manvitha Narasimhan** of Bentonville and **Eric Tang** of Little Rock were selected from among the state's top student leaders. They will join the delegation of 104 outstanding high school students – two from each state, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity – for an intensive week-long study of the federal government and the people who lead it, meeting with Senators, the President, a Supreme Court Justice and other high-level officials. Each delegate will also receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs.

#### About the USSYP Delegates:

**Manvitha Narasimhan**, a senior at Bentonville High School, serves as a District Student Advisory Board Member for Bentonville Public Schools. Deeply involved in Speech and Debate, she serves on the National Speech and Debate Association's Student Leadership Council, contributes to statewide advocacy through the Arkansas Communication and Theatre Arts Association Student Advisory Board, and leads her school team as Captain of the debate team. Manvitha has been honored as an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme candidate, Arkansas Girls State delegate, where she was elected President of the Senate, as well as a member of Senator John Boozman's Congressional Youth Cabinet. Manvitha also serves as an Arkansas DECA Vice President, an organization focused on business and entrepreneurship, Creative Director for the Academy for Public Service and a social media intern at Arkansas United. Underscoring her

academic and artistic achievements, she is also a National Merit Semifinalist, Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy recipient in French and a 2025 All-State Violinist. Manvitha plans to pursue a dual major in political science and business before attending law school. She hopes to serve Arkansas as a legislator and ultimately in the United States Senate, expanding educational opportunities and strengthening civic participation nationwide.

**Eric Tang**, a senior at Little Rock Central High School, serves as the Vice President for the Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society. He is a 2025 National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist as well as Founder and President of the school's Key Club, where he coordinates service initiatives that support both campus needs and local organizations. His civic involvement includes his election as Attorney General at Arkansas Boys State and his designation as First Alternate for Boys Nation. He has also been honored twice as a Clinton Foundation Student Presidential Honoree, recognizing his dedication to scholarship, leadership and public service. He serves as Captain of the Policy Debate Team and Captain of the Science, Engineering, Communication, Mathematics, and Enrichment Marketing Team, leading peers in research, collaboration and competition preparation. He is also an active member of the varsity swim team, the Beta Club, the National Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society and Model UN. He also serves as a Counselor-in-Training at Camp Aldersgate, a summer camp for children with special needs. Eric plans to pursue medical school and a career as a physician, complemented by training in public policy to help strengthen healthcare systems and promote community well-being.

Chosen as alternates to the 2026 program were Mr. **Michael Drake Norris**, a resident of Alma, who attends Haas Hall Academy – Ft. Smith and Ms. **Uijin Joann Kim**, a resident of Jonesboro, who attends Valley View High School.

Delegates and alternates are selected by the state departments of education, including the District of Columbia and the 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 Arkansas Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva.

#### **About The United States Senate Youth Program:**

The United States Senate Youth Program is a competitive, merit-based program created by Senate Resolution 324 in 1962 by the sons of William Randolph Hearst and the Senate leadership of the day – Senators Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey. The USSYP is designed to encourage America's most talented young people to consider public service as an important, life-long, and noble pursuit. Senate Resolution 324 passed unanimously.

The Hearst Foundations have fully funded the program since inception, as stipulated in SR 324, no government funds are utilized.

USSYP alumni now number more than 6,300 and many go on to build legacies of public service. The distinguished alumni include Senator Susan Collins, the first USSYP delegate to be elected U.S. Senator; former Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, the first appointed as a Cabinet Secretary; Representative Sarah McBride, the second to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; 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; and former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first to be elected Governor.

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

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Four Capitol Mall • Little Rock, AR 72201 • 501-682-4475

