



63rd Annual

UNITED STATES SENATE  
★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★  
EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process: Stefanie Wager at [stefanie.wager@iowa.gov](mailto:stefanie.wager@iowa.gov).

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

**January 13, 2025, Washington, D.C.** —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) is pleased to announce that high school students Ms. Thanvee Shantha Paga and Mr. Isaac Thomas Vosburg will join Senator Charles Grassley and Senator Joni K. Ernst in representing Iowa during the 63rd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 1 — 8, 2025. Thanvee Paga of Hiawatha and Isaac Vosburg of Hampton were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation that will attend meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, and other officials throughout the week. Each delegate will also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study.

The USSYP was founded in 1962 by the sons of William Randolph Hearst and the senate leadership of the day -- Senators Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey – in response to the deep divisiveness and national anxiety following the McCarthy era. They outlined a plan to encourage America's most talented young people to consider public service as an important, life-long, and noble pursuit, sponsoring Senate Resolution 324, which passed unanimously. As stated in founding testimony, the program strives "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 two outstanding high school students 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. Each student will also receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs. The Hearst Foundations have fully funded the program since inception; as stipulated, no government funds are utilized. ([United State Senate Resolution 324](#))

Thanvee (Tori) Paga, a senior at Kennedy High School, serves as president of the Key Club. She is involved in numerous school and community activities, including serving as vice captain of the Academic Decathlon team, yearbook editor, Iowa Junior Philanthropist Foundation state lead, and Kennedy High School speech officer. She also serves as an officer in the Science National Honor Society and an officer for Psi Alpha, a Psychology Honor Society. She volunteers extensively in her community, with involvement at the Coe Reading Camp for several summers, the Catherine McCauley Center, and WayPoint, a housing center for survivors of domestic abuse. Tori served as a member of the Iowa Youth Congress for two years and has earned numerous awards such as Honor Roll, AP scholar, and a Girls Nation senator. She plans to study finance and environmental science in college, obtain a law degree and pursue a legal career.

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Isaac Vosburg, a senior at Hampton-Dumont High School, serves as first vice president of the Iowa Association of Student Councils. He is involved in numerous school and community activities, previously serving as 4-H Club president, a Franklin County Youth Council member, Class president, representative, Student Body vice president, and sentinel of the Tall Corn FFA chapter. He has participated in the U.S. Department of State's Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Abroad program, spending his last school year in Malaysia as a foreign exchange student and cultural ambassador. He has also been a World Food Prize Global Youth Institute delegate and has volunteered with the foundation as a Global Youth Institute group leader. Isaac's volunteer work has included creating and implementing English language programs for primary and secondary school students through AFS Antarabudaya Malaysia, helping lead orientations and activities with the Iowa Resource for International Service, and jointly setting forth a state project of "Planting Kindness, Sprouting Change" with the other senior Iowa Association of Student Councils student board members. He has received numerous awards including being recognized as a World Food Prize Borlaug Scholar and being named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist. Isaac plans to attend Grinnell College pursuing coursework in global development, international relations, peace and conflict resolution, environmentalism, education, Arabic, and area studies in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia.

Chosen as alternates to the 2025 program were Ms. Shanza Sami, a resident of Iowa City, who attends Iowa City West High School and Mr. Teegan Jones, a resident of Spirit Lake, who attends Spirit Lake 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 Iowa delegates and alternates were designated by McKenzie Snow, Director of Education.

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 6,200 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; Secretary of Transportation and former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, Pete Buttigieg, the first alumna to be appointed as a cabinet secretary; Representative Sarah McBride, the second alumna to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; former 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, and former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first alumna to be elected governor.

Members of the U. S. Senate Youth Program 2025 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina, the 2025 USSYP Republican Co-Chair and Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the 2025 USSYP Democratic Co-Chair. The full USSYP Senate Advisory Committee includes the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders, and four senators from each party who lend their names in support. Serving on the 2025 Advisory Committee: Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine, Senator John Cornyn of Texas, Senator Jerry Moran of Kansas, Senator Pete Ricketts of Nebraska, Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada, Senator Tina Smith of Minnesota and Senator Peter Welch of Vermont.

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

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