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Contact: Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:
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North Dakota Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program
Students to Participate in the First Online Program and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship

February 22, 2021, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Athalia Kay Haughton and Ms. Micah Schlittenhardt will join Senator John Hoeven and Senator Kevin Cramer in representing North Dakota during the 59th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 14 — 17, 2021. Athalia Haughton and Micah Schlittenhardt both of Bismarck 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 pandemic, the 2021 program will break ground as the first-ever fully virtual Washington Week, and is designed to be a highly interactive and exciting education and leadership forum for the nation's most outstanding student leaders.

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 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. However, this year, the program will be held online. 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.

Athalia Haughton, a junior at Century High School, serves as the Bismarck chair and State Programs director of the High School Democrats of America. She is an AP Scholar with Honor, serves as a Student Council representative, Student Congress member, and is the cofounder and president of Student Advocates of North Dakota. She was a state semi-finalist in State Debate, nationally qualified in Lincoln Douglas debate, is a two-time state qualifier in Speech, a One Act Play state champion, and was a member of the the first-ever North Dakotan team to become a World Schools Debate national qualifier. She crafts blankets for local immigrants, volunteers at Heaven's Helpers soup kitchen, and raises money for the Alzheimer's Association. Athalia has prepared testimony advocating for international cultural diversity classes in North Dakota public schools and is passionate about reducing the stigma surrounding mental health, especially for students. After graduation, Athalia would like to attend Howard University to pursue political science and law degrees. She would like to become a politician and a policy writer at either a state or national level.

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Micah Schlittenhardt, a senior at Legacy High School, serves as the president of the North Dakota Association of Student Councils. She ranks first in her class of 320 students, is an AP Scholar, and a Presidential Citizenship Award recipient. She is president of the Legacy Concert Choir, and a member of the National Honor Society and the Bismarck-Mandan Student Chamber. She is involved in varsity cheerleading, All-State Jazz Choir, Central Dakota Children's Choir and Academic Allstate. She has been an advocate for Parkinson's Disease and Alzheimer's awareness and support within her community, and has partnered with a locally-owned bakery to pioneer an annual fundraiser to raise money for RESPITE care. She has been recognized as the 2021 Distinguished Young Woman of North Dakota, and Miss North Dakota's Outstanding Teen 2018. After graduation, Micah plans to attend the University of Mary in Bismarck to study philosophy. She would like to study abroad in Vatican City and eventually pursue a career in academia.

Chosen as alternates to the 2021 program were Ms. Ella Leidy, a resident of Wilton, who attends Wilton High School and Ms. Emma Kratcha, a resident of Hankinson, who attends Hankinson 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 North Dakota delegates and alternates were designated by Ms. Kirsten Baesler, Superintendent.

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 and senior members of the national media, 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 5,800 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; 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; 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. 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 2021 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Democratic Co-Chair; Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma, Republican Co-Chair; Advisory Members: Senator Thomas R. Carper (D-DE); Senator Christopher S. Murphy (D-CT); Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ); Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR); Senator Richard Burr (R-NC); Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND); Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) and Senator Roger F. Wicker (R-MS). 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
