



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:  
Mr. Jay Nichols at [jnichols@vpaonline.org](mailto:jnichols@vpaonline.org).

For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program:  
Program Director Ms. Rayne Guilford (800) 425-3632 or [rguilford@hearstfdn.org](mailto:rguilford@hearstfdn.org).

## **Vermont 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. Christopher Lawrence Alfano and Ms. Eva VanderVliet Gould will join Senator Bernard Sanders and Senator Peter Welch in representing Vermont during the 62nd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 2 — 9, 2024. Christopher Alfano of Dorset and Eva Gould of Brattleboro 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.

Christopher Alfano, a senior at Burr and Burton Academy, serves as the president of the Student Council. He is passionate about improving civics education for students in Vermont and across the country. Chris founded Civicy, a mobile app that provides a free and easy way for Americans to learn about the Constitution and other aspects of our government. He has partnered with CivXNow, a national coalition dedicated to civics education, and met with Vermont's secretary of State to discuss civics in his home state. He has also interned for Vermont State Representative Mike Rice. He was one of seventy-five students in the nation selected as a Civics Unplugged fellow, where he participated in workshops with members of Congress and officials in the U.S. Department of State. Chris founded a UNICEF club chapter at Burr and Burton to raise funds and awareness for children's rights issues. He intends to major in political science in college.

(more)

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Eva Gould, a senior at Brattleboro High School, serves as a representative on the Student Council. Additionally, she is the founder of the Brattleboro PeaceJam chapter, a U.S.-based global youth organization led by Nobel Peace laureates. She was the leading youth representative in Brattleboro's campaign to lower the voting age to 16 years old, the first successful law of its kind in the United States, and she helped to override the governor's veto to make this law a reality. In addition, Eva was a leader in her school's process for the renaming of the school mascot. Future plans may include running for office and representing Brattleboro at the statehouse in Montpelier, or representing the state of Vermont in Washington, D.C. Eva aspires to lead nationwide initiatives that prioritize environmental sustainability, promote gender equality, and build improved infrastructure for rural communities. She seeks to pair her leadership and communication skills with her passion for helping underserved communities.

Chosen as alternates to the 2024 program were Ms. Hannah Cunningham, a resident of Burlington, who attends Rice High School and Ms. Shabnam Saini, a resident of Colchester, who attends Colchester 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 Vermont delegates and alternates were designated by Heather Bouchey, Interim Secretary 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 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; 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 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](http://www.ussenateyouth.org)**

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