



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## News Release

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### Arkansas Student Delegates Chosen for U.S. Senate Youth Program

WASHINGTON — Senators Mark Pryor and John Boozman today announced the names of the two students who have been selected as delegates to the 50th Anniversary United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP).

Payton Finch of Paragould and Nathanael Mickelson of Alma were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 50th Anniversary Washington Week.

The Arkansas Department of Education, which helps coordinate the program on the state level, is pleased to join Sens. Pryor and Boozman in honoring these two worthy and exemplary students.

The USSYP will be held March 3-10, 2012, in Washington, D.C.

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 impetus for the program as stated in Senate testimony was "to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and 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 104 of 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. 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 of the 104 student delegates with a \$5,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs. Transportation and all expenses for Washington Week are also provided by The Hearst Foundations, as stipulated in S.Res.324; no government funds are utilized.

Payton Finch attends Greene County Technical High School and serves as Student Council representative. Payton's leadership skills were developed serving on student council, Model UN, and We the People. He is Junior Civitan vice president, FBLA secretary, quiz bowl captain, and an Arkansas Boys State representative. His volunteer activities include working with Boy Scouts, Witt House Emergency Food Pantry, Angel Food Ministries, Heifer International, Habitat for Humanity, and other organizations. Payton's plans for the future are to attend the U.S. Naval Academy and study political science.

Nathanael Mickelson attends Alma High School and serves as Student Council representative. Nathanael Mickelson has developed academic and leadership skills serving on Student Council, FBLA, science club, French club, attending Arkansas Governor's School and National History Day competition. He is a National Merit Semifinalist. His volunteer activities include working with March of Dimes, Community Outreach Center, and Christmas is for Caring. His current plans include achieving dual majors in economics and finance followed by a master's degree, possibly a doctorate in economics.

Chosen as alternates to the 2012 program were Jordan Reed, a resident of Cabot, who attends Cabot High School and Robert Dalby, a resident of Texarkana, who attends Arkansas Senior High School.

The chief educational officer in each state selects the delegates after nomination by teachers and principals. In Arkansas, delegates were designated by Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Arkansas Education Commissioner, after being presented with recommendations from a panel of current Department of Education staff and retired employees.

While in Washington the student delegates will attend meetings and briefings with Senators and Congressional staff, the President, a Justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, an Ambassador to the United States and top members of the national media. The students will also tour many of the national monuments and several museums and they will stay at the historic Mayflower Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C.

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 5,000 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 delegate to be elected U.S. Senator; New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first delegate to be elected governor; Congressman Cory Gardner, the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; 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 President of the Progressive Policy Institute Robert Shapiro, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

Members of the USSYP 2012 50th Anniversary Senate Advisory Committee are: Co-Chairs — Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico and Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine. Advisory Committee — Senator Richard J. Durbin of Illinois, Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand of New York, Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Senator Barbara A. Mikulski of Maryland, Senator Mike Crapo of Idaho, Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia, Senator Richard G. Lugar of Indiana and Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama. Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders and the Vice President of the United States.

Photos of the delegates and alternatives will be posted at <http://ArkansasEd.Org/about/releases.html>

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