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Contact: For questions about your state's delegates, alternates or selection process, please contact your state selection administrator: Mr. Stephen Armstrong at stephen.armstrong@ct.gov or (860) 713-6706.

For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program, please contact Program Director Rayne Guilford at (800) 425-3632 or rguilford@hearstfdn.org. Also see www.usssenateryouth.org.

Connecticut Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program **-- Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship --**

January 11, 2017, Washington, D.C. — Senators Richard Blumenthal and Christopher Murphy today announced the names of the two students who have been selected as delegates to the 55th annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) that will be held March 4 — 11, 2017 in Washington, D.C. Ms. Isha Sanjay Dalal of Trumbull and Ms. Emily Kate Sullivan of Simsbury were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 55th annual Washington Week.

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 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 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 student with a \$10,000 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.

Isha Dalal attends Trumbull High School and serves as the chair of Education and Advocacy for the Youth United for Habitat for Humanity for Coastal Fairfield County. Isha is also the founder of the statewide organization, Voice, which empowers students to become involved in legislative affairs. Over 60 students from Connecticut are involved, and this year's Voice theme is promoting literacy. She is the president of her school's Mock Trial team, which has participated in national and international mock trial competitions, and is the vice president of her school's Model United Nations organization, which has competed in numerous Model UN conferences.

Emily Sullivan attends Simsbury High School and serves as a student representative to the Simsbury, Connecticut Board of Education. Emily is also involved in Best Buddies, Special Olympics, Unified Theater, and TOPSoccer, which are all organizations dedicated to ending the social and physical isolation of people with disabilities. Additionally, she plays cello in her school's orchestra, and is a leader on the varsity tennis team. Outside of school Emily volunteers at her local hospital, at her church as a religious educator, and as a participant in a project promoting the history of Martin Luther King in Connecticut.

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Chosen as alternates to the 2017 program were Timothy Ross, a resident of Ellington, who attends Ellington High School and Olivia Ferdinand, a resident of Weston, who attends Weston 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 Connecticut delegates and alternates were designated by Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education.

While in Washington the student delegates attend meetings and briefings with senators, members of the House of Representatives, Congressional staff, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, an ambassador to the United States and senior 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 5,500 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 to the Senate; Senator Cory Gardner, the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the second to be elected to the Senate; 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 Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie, 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 U. S. Senate Youth Program 2017 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Roger F. Wicker of Mississippi, Republican Co-Chair; Senator Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Democratic Co-Chair; Bipartisan Senate Advisory Members: Senators Bill Cassidy MD (R-LA), Joni K. Ernst (R-IA), James M. Inhofe (R-OK), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Christopher S. Murphy (D-CT) and Jon Tester (D-MT). Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders.
