



For Immediate Release

Contact: For questions about your state's delegates, alternates or selection process, please contact your state selection administrator: Mr. Ken Page at (802) 229-0547 or Kpage@vpaonline.org. For more general information about the United States Senate Youth Program, please contact Program Director Rayne Guilford at 800-425-3632, www.ussenateyouth.org.

Vermont Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program **-- Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$5000 Scholarship--**

Senators Patrick J. Leahy and Bernard Sanders today announced the names of the two students who have been selected as delegates to the 49th annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) that will be held March 5 – 12, 2011 in Washington, D.C. Sam Epstein of Shelburne and Katherine Meyer of Williston were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will attend the program's 49th 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 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.

Sam Epstein is vice president of the Student Body at Champlain Valley Union High School. In addition, Sam has participated in the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership as an ambassador, junior facilitator, and Planning Committee member. His Amnesty International Club advisor writes, "His passion for human rights work is genuine and deeply held."

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Katherine Meyer is president of the Student Body at Champlain Valley Union High School. She also served as a Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership representative, alumni counselor and logged 247 service hours. Her Student Council advisor states, "Her peers see her as a leader, respect her work ethic and feel heard and valued by her."

Chosen as alternates to the 2011 program were Stevie Durocher, a resident of Sutton, who attends Lyndon Institute and Kristin Rouleau, a resident of Barre, who attends Spaulding High School.

The chief educational officer in each state selects the delegates after nomination by teachers and principals. This year's delegates were designated by Mr. Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner of Education.

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 remarkable leadership abilities and a strong commitment to public service, this year's students rank academically in the top one percent of their states. They continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. Among the many distinguished former program delegates are Senator Susan Collins of Maine, the first program delegate elected to the Senate; Congressman-elect Cory Gardner of Colorado, the first alumnus to be elected to the House; New Jersey Governor Christopher Christie; former Chief Judge Robert Henry, U.S. Court of Appeals; former Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt; former Presidential Advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional distinguished alumni are, former Lt. Governor of Idaho David LeRoy, Foreign Service Officers, members of State Legislatures, military officers, top Congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

Members of the USSYP 2011 49th Annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Co-Chairs — Senator Ben Nelson of Nebraska and Senator John Cornyn of Texas. Advisory Committee — Senator Dianne Feinstein of California, Senator Kay R. Hagan of North Carolina, Senator Bernard Sanders of Vermont, Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming, Senator Scott P. Brown of Massachusetts, Senator James E. Risch of Idaho and Senator Roger F. Wicker of Mississippi. Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders and the Vice President of the United States.
