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Nevada 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. Robert Y. Barsel and Mr. Max Edward Grinstein will join Senator Catherine Cortez Masto and Senator Jacky Rosen in representing Nevada during the 62nd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 2 — 9, 2024. Robert Barsel of Las Vegas and Max Grinstein of Reno 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.

Robert Barsel, a senior at The Meadows School, serves as an officer in the National Stem Honor Society. He founded a nonprofit organization, Coping Kids, to improve children's mental health, has raised \$32,000 in grants and donations, and offers free resources through the website such as mental health tools, support group tutorial for teachers, and various community resources to students. He was appointed by Governor Joe Lombardo to serve as the student representative on the Nevada State Committee on School Safety which works to support student and teacher mental health in public schools and provide official policy recommendations concerning school safety. He drafted and presented Senate Bill 313 in the 2023 Nevada legislative session to increase mental health education for students and teachers. Robert has authored a book for teenagers, available for free, entitled "Everyone Has Mental Health", and wrote, cast, directed, and acted in a training video to teach how to offer a safe and effective mental health support group. The book is being used in seven schools, in three states and has been downloaded over 2,800 times since last year. Robert volunteers with multiple organizations and is the varsity tennis team captain. He would like to major in biomedical engineering and philosophy and ultimately become a professor of pharmaceutical biology after earning a PhD.

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Max Grinstein, a senior at the Davidson Academy, serves as the vice chair of the Reno Youth City Council. He was previously elected the vice chair of the Nevada Youth Legislature (NYL), where he now serves as an alumni mentor trainer. Since 2021, he has worked as an editorial intern at the Prison Journalism Project (PJP), a nationwide nonprofit that trains and publishes incarcerated reporters. Drawing on his experiences at PJP and the NYL, he authored legislation, Nebraska Senate Bill 234, to reduce the cost of phone calls between incarcerated Nevadans and their families. His advocacy and committee testimony helped the bill to pass unanimously, and it was signed into law in June 2023. Max also founded and serves as co-editor-in-chief of his school's first newspaper. In his free time, he loves historical research, and his papers have been published in Scholastic Art and Writing's Best Teen Writing 2022 (on the first uncensored prison newspaper, The Angolite), The Concord Review (on the diplomatic history of the island of Corfu), and The History Teacher and The Texas Historian (on the Fifth Circuit Four, a group of federal judges who helped to desegregate the South). In the summer of 2023, Max traveled to Israel to study Jewish texts as a Bronfman fellow. He hopes to study history and political science in college.

Chosen as alternates to the 2024 program were Mr. Ethan Nguyen, a resident of Las Vegas, who attends Advanced Technologies Academy and Ms. Coco Wang-Xinyue Zhang, also a resident of Las Vegas, who attends West Career and Technical Academy.

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 Nevada delegates and alternates were designated by Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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 alumnus to be elected U.S. senator; Secretary of Transportation and former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, Pete Buttigieg, the first alumnus to be appointed as a cabinet secretary; former Senator Cory Gardner, the second alumnus 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 alumnus 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

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