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Minnesota Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program
Students to Participate in the First Online Program and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship

February 22, 2021, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Fardouza Mahamud Farah and Ms. Alainn Clare Hanson will join Senator Amy Klobuchar and Senator Tina Smith in representing Minnesota during the 59th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 14 — 17, 2021. Fardouza Farah of Owatonna and Alainn Hanson of Red Wing were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation who will each also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study. Due to the pandemic, the 2021 program will break ground as the first-ever fully virtual Washington Week, and is designed to be a highly interactive and exciting education and leadership forum for the nation's most outstanding student leaders.

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 brings 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. However, this year, the program will be held online. 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 S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

Fardouza Farah, a junior at Owatonna High School, serves as the Junior Class representative. She is an executive board member of the Central Asian English Project, helping tutor over 100 girls in Kyrgyzstan and provide free English lessons and resources. Fardouza is the Minnesota Youth Against Sexual Violence chapter president, working with a team of passionate fellow students across the state to raise awareness about sexual violence and provide resources to sexual assault survivors; she also works on initiatives that help better Minnesota for survivors by personally starting local programs like the Owatonna Youth Against Sexual Violence group, and helping set up similar groups across the state. During quarantine Fardouza co-founded a nonprofit organization, FL Tutoring Services, which provides low-income students and underrepresented students across Minnesota with free virtual tutoring.

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Alainn Hanson, a senior at Red Wing High School, serves as a student representative to the local School Board and Human Rights Commission. She is an active member of many student government organizations and local government organizations in her community. She has participated in both the YMCA's Youth in Government program and Model UN. Alainn founded and chairs the Red Wing Youth Commission, has a passion for government and democracy, and intends to major in political science while at college.

Chosen as alternates to the 2021 program were Mr. Kesarin Mehta, a resident of Rochester, who attends Mayo High School and Ms. Miriam Manna, a resident of Plymouth, who attends Robbinsdale Armstrong 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 Minnesota delegates and alternates were designated by Ms. Mary Cathryn Ricker, Commissioner of Education.

During the program week, the student delegates will attend online meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies and senior members of the national media, 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 5,800 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; 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, former presidential advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional notables include former Lt. Governor of Idaho David Leroy, 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 2021 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Democratic Co-Chair; Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma, Republican Co-Chair; Advisory Members: Senator Thomas R. Carper (D-DE); Senator Christopher S. Murphy (D-CT); Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ); Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR); Senator Richard Burr (R-NC); Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND); Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) and Senator Roger F. Wicker (R-MS). Each year, the Honorary Co-Chairs of the program are the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders.

For more information please visit: www.ussenateyouth.org
