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Ohio 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. Wright Chen and Ms. Sudhiksha Ramesh will join Senator Sherrod Brown and Senator J. D. Vance in representing Ohio during the 62nd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 2 — 9, 2024. Wright Chen of Oakwood and Sudhiksha Ramesh of Solon 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.

Wright Chen, a senior from Oakwood High School, serves as president of the Senior Class and holds a GPA of 4.55. He is captain of the golf team, founder of his school's chapter of the Junior State of America, a member of the a cappella group, captain of the Quiz Bowl team, a member of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion group and a wrestler. He is also active in his community, serving as a volunteer teacher for Kids In New Directions and a volunteer for the Dayton Association of Chinese Americans while also participating in the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and Junior Leadership Dayton. He has been recognized as a national bronze medalist in Academic Decathlon, Oakwood's Best All Around Junior Boy, and elected mayor at Boys State. Wright plans to attend college and pursue an academic field leading to a career involving public policy and global health.

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Sudhiksha Ramesh, a senior at Solon High School, serves as the co-president of the Senior Class and the Student Council. She is the president and chair of the City Club of Cleveland's Youth Forum Council. She is actively engaged in various leadership endeavors, holding officer positions in her school's American Cancer Youth Society, Model UN, and Speech and Debate. Beyond her academic and leadership pursuits, she is deeply connected to her cultural roots as a Bharathanatyam dancer, showcasing her talent at venues such as PlayHouse Square and the Maltz Museum. Her artistic endeavors have earned her recognition and numerous awards, including top honors at competitions like India Fest USA and Vindhya. Demonstrating a strong commitment to community service and the legal field, Sudhiksha co-founded initiatives such as Speak Up, a summer camp for middle schoolers in her city. She also established the Youth Law Institute, a nonprofit organization promoting awareness of legal proceedings and providing a space for youth to explore their interest in law. She has excelled in the most rigorous coursework offered at her high school and has been named a National Merit semifinalist. She is dual-enrolled at Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve University. Sudhiksha aspires to attend college, where she intends to study political science and psychology.

Chosen as alternates to the 2024 program were Ms. Shahana Kalyanasundaram, a resident of Powell, who attends Olentangy Liberty High School and Ms. Lahari Donepudi, a resident of Dublin, who attends Dublin Jerome 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 Ohio delegates and alternates were designated by Ms. Jessica Voltolini, Interim Director, Department of Education and the Workforce.

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