



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

January 11, 2022, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Saron Tefera and Ms. Cordelia Rachel Rutgert Van der Veer will join Senator Sherrod Brown and Senator Rob Portman in representing Ohio during the 60th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 6 — 9, 2022. Saron Tefera of Cincinnati and Cordelia Van der Veer of Toledo 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 ongoing pandemic, the 2022 program will be held online, through a comprehensive and highly interactive virtual education and leadership forum.

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 S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

Saron Tefera, a senior at Anderson High School, serves as the president of the Student Body. She also participates in her school's Diversity Club, Student Council, and National Honor Society. She was elected governor at Buckeye Girls State and focused on education, equity, and environmental reform. She was a part of the planning committee for International Day of the Girl and organized an event regarding female education internationally and works with the social mobility subcommittee for the Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls. Her subcommittee is working on helping minor mothers find resources for housing after they have given birth. She is also an Amharic-English translator for community members. Saron intends to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in economics, international affairs, or political science. After college, she would like to work at the United Nations with the eventual goal of becoming the U.S. ambassador to the UN.

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UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

2022 Ohio Delegate Announcement
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page -2-

Cordelia Van der Veer, a senior at Toledo Technology Academy, serves as the president of the National Honor Society. She is also a Student Council representative, participates in National History Day, and was awarded the Equality in History Award at the national competition. She participates in her school's robotics team and Quiz Bowl team, and is active in her community, participating in Families4Families as the co-founder of the Toledo chapter, Youth in Philanthropy Encouraging Excellence of Leadership Toledo as the co-president, and Students Demand Action as a National Advisory Board member. She participated in the Midstory summer internship, which culminated in a published article. As part of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs High School Internship Program, she takes dual-enrollment public affairs courses and researches with a professor. Cordelia's future academic plans are focused on majoring in public policy with a secondary concentration in quantitative analysis.

Chosen as alternates to the 2022 program were Ms. Jenny Hu, a resident of Cincinnati, who attends The Seven Hills School and Ms. Brea Belville, a resident of Ironton, who attends Symmes Valley 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 Stephanie Siddens, State Superintendent 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, 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 6,000 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 2022 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Christopher A. Coons of Delaware, Democratic Co-Chair; Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine, Republican Co-Chair; Advisory Members: Senator Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM); Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley (D-OR); Senator Tina Smith (D-MN); Senator Mark R. Warner (D-VA); Senator Mike Braun (R-IN); Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV); Senator James M. Inhofe (R-OK); and Senator M. Michael Rounds (R-SD). 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
