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Michigan 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. Sarayu Sitha Bethamcherla and Ms. Jayanti Gupta will join Senator Debbie Stabenow and Senator Gary Peters in representing Michigan during the 60th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 6 — 9, 2022. Sarayu Bethamcherla of Troy and Jayanti Gupta, also of Troy, 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.

Sarayu Bethamcherla, a senior at Troy High School, serves as vice president of the Student Body. She holds the highest student leadership position in the state as the Michigan Association of Student Councils and Honors Societies Student Board of Delegates president. Through facilitating regional and statewide conferences, she aids leaders in realizing and acting on their passion for the community. Additionally, she works for the National Equity Project and serves as a youth leader for her district's Equity Board where she established a platform for students to voice concerns about educational inequity. Sarayu is a Board of Education student representative, an advisor on the Superintendent's Student Advisory Board for Troy, and the DECA chapter co-president, a youth organization focused on entrepreneurship. She also advocates for gun violence prevention on the March For Our Lives state team. The lasting impact of service and centering youth vision is what inspires her to pursue a career in human rights law and eventually, public office.

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Jayanti Gupta, a senior at International Academy East High School, serves as the state director of Michigan for March For Our Lives. As an intersectional organizer, she actively advocates for gun violence prevention through community-based work, uplifts marginalized voices by speaking on reproductive justice panels with nonprofits like The National State Board of Education, and works with organizations like Rising Voices, which aims to increase civic engagement amongst Asian-American Michiganders. She was recognized by The Brooklyn Kiwanis for her exemplary community service. Her passion for public service extends to politics where she has worked on several political campaigns including those of President Joe Biden and Representative Haley Stevens. She was also nominated by Senator Gary Peters for the United States Senate Page Program. In the future, Jayanti plans to study political science, nonprofit management, and law to better serve the community she calls home.

Chosen as alternates to the 2022 program were Ms. Abigail Kendal, a resident of West Bloomfield, who attends International Academy and Ms. Talya Castell, a resident of Ann Arbor who attends Washtenaw International 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 Michigan delegates and alternates were designated by Michael F. Rice, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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
