



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: For questions about your state's delegates, alternates or selection process, please contact your state selection administrator: Mr. Joe Schmidt at Joe.Schmidt@maine.gov or (207) 624-6828.

For general information about the United States Senate Youth Program: Program Director Ms. Rayne Guilford (800) 425-3632 or rguilford@hearstfdn.org. Also see www.ussenateyouth.org.

Maine Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program ***Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$10,000 College Scholarship***

January 11, 2018, Washington, D.C. —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Ms. Caroline Baldacci and Ms. Virginia Jewel Hugo-Vidal will join Senator Susan Collins and Senator Angus King in representing Maine in the nation's capital during the 56th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 3 — 10, 2018. Caroline Baldacci of Bangor and Virginia Hugo-Vidal of Gorham were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation who will also each 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 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 104 of 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. 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. Transportation and all expenses for Washington Week are also provided by The Hearst Foundations; as stipulated in S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

Caroline Baldacci attends Bangor High School where she serves as the president of the National Honor Society, captain of the Congressional Debate Team and a member of both the Student and Class Councils. She is also a two-time qualifier for the National Congressional Debate competition. Additionally, Caroline has volunteered for many political campaigns including the Hillary Clinton for President campaign. She hopes to pursue a degree in history or political science before becoming a public servant.

Virginia Hugo-Vidal attends Gorham High School and serves in an appointed position to the Superintendent's Policy Focus Group. She is also an officer for her Thespian Society, Ambassadors Club, and Debate Club, and participates in Model United Nations, serving as the head delegate for her school. Virginia is active in her community, volunteering in the Youth in Government Program, the Maine Youth Court, the Salmon Falls Library, and as an AP United States History tutor. Virginia hopes to pursue a degree in political science and international relations and aspires to work for the U.S. State Department after graduation.

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UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

2018 Maine Delegate Announcement
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Page -2-

Chosen as alternates to the 2018 program were Mr. Christopher Hascall, a resident of Standish, who attends Bonny Eagle High School and Ms. Liberty Ladd, a resident of Falmouth, who attends Falmouth 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 Maine delegates and alternates were designated by Dr. Robert G. Hasson, Jr., Commissioner of Education.

While in Washington the student delegates attend meetings and briefings with senators, members of the House of Representatives, Congressional staff, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, an ambassador to the United States and senior members of the national media. The students will also tour many of the national monuments and several museums and they will stay at the historic Mayflower Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C.

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 5,500 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 delegate to be elected to the Senate; Senator Cory Gardner, the first delegate to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the second to be elected to the Senate; 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 Governor of New Jersey Chris Christie, former Lt. Governor of Idaho David Leroy, former President of the Progressive Policy Institute Robert Shapiro, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, healthcare providers and university educators.

Members of the U. S. Senate Youth Program 2018 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, Republican Co-Chair; Senator Angus S. King, Jr. of Maine, Independent Co-Chair; Bipartisan Senate Advisory Members: John Barrasso, M.D. (R-WY), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Kamala D. Harris (D-CA), Joe Manchin III (D-WV), Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Brian Schatz (D-HI). 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 see: www.ussenateyouth.org**
