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Contact: Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:
Ms. Cindy Huffman at USSYP@fldoe.org or 850-245-7858.

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

Florida 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. Pristine Thai and Mr. Miles Kai Wang will join Senator Marco Rubio and Senator Rick Scott in representing Florida during the 60th annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 6 — 9, 2022. Pristine Thai of Orlando and Miles Wang of Wellington 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.

Pristine Thai, a senior at Lake Nona High School, serves as an officer in the National Social Studies Honor Society. She has volunteered extensively for three campaigns on the presidential and congressional level. As chair of Florida's Student Basic Needs Coalition, she collaborates with Valencia College's Student Government Association to draft legislation addressing student food insecurity. Pristine volunteers at the Orlando Veterans Affairs Medical Center by assisting veterans and military family members in navigating the Center. An ardent proponent of civic engagement, she carries voter registration forms in her backpack, actively helping community members and peers register to vote. As the Senate president at Florida Girls State, she learned first-hand the power of compromise and debate, fueling her interest in politics. In her free time, she teaches piano to young children. Pristine plans to continue campaign work and possibly run for office after studying government and public policy in college.

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Miles Wang, a senior at A.W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, serves as the Senior Class representative in Student Government. He is the captain of the USA Debate Team, representing the nation in international debate competitions, and is also the president of his school team. He has given back to the community as director of finance for the nonprofit Project Dialogue and Debate, which raised over \$15,000 this year for charity through public speaking workshops, and by co-founding the mentoring organization Future Communicators of Palm Beach. He runs community service projects as president of the Artists Reaching to Society (ARTS) club, informs his peers as the web managing editor of The Muse newsmagazine, and serves at-risk teens as a student attorney in Palm Beach County Youth Court. A policy aficionado, Miles plans to study economics and government in college with the goal of becoming a policymaker.

Chosen as alternates to the 2022 program were Mr. Maxton Torres, a resident of Miami, who attends Belen Jesuit Preparatory School and Mr. Wesley Michael Littleton, a resident of Lynn Haven, who attends Bay 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 Florida delegates and alternates were designated by Richard Corcoran, 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, 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 alumnus to be elected U.S. senator; Secretary of Transportation and former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, Pete Buttigieg; former Senator Cory Gardner, the second alumnus 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 alumnus 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
