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**Contact:** Questions about your state's delegates, alternates or state selection process:  
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**Illinois Students Selected for United States Senate Youth Program**  
**Students Headed to Washington, D. C. and to Receive \$10,000 Scholarship**

**January 13, 2025, Washington, D.C.** —The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) is pleased to announce that high school students Ms. Shreya Chowdhary Nallamothe and Ms. Miriam Iyassu Tsegay will join Senator Richard J. Durbin and Senator Tammy Duckworth in representing Illinois during the 63rd annual USSYP Washington Week, to be held March 1 — 8, 2025. Shreya Nallamothe of Normal and Miriam Tsegay of Bolingbrook were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104 national student delegation that will attend meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, and other officials throughout the week. Each delegate will also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study.

The USSYP was founded in 1962 by the sons of William Randolph Hearst and the senate leadership of the day -- Senators Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey -- in response to the deep divisiveness and national anxiety following the McCarthy era. They outlined a plan to encourage America's most talented young people to consider public service as an important, life-long, and noble pursuit, sponsoring Senate Resolution 324, which passed unanimously. As stated in founding testimony, the program strives "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 two outstanding high school students 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. Each student will also receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs. The Hearst Foundations have fully funded the program since inception; as stipulated, no government funds are utilized. ([United State Senate Resolution 324](#))

Shreya Nallamothe, a senior at University High School, serves as vice president of the Student Body. She helped write and pass the nation's first bill to protect child influencers in Illinois, legislation that has since been introduced in ten states. She has also researched and advocated for civics education at the Illinois State Board of Education. She is the chair of her school's chapter of Not in Our School, a national organization dedicated to creating safe, equitable, and inclusive school communities. In this role, Shreya organized a drive that donated 1,300 menstrual products and revised her school calendar to prevent school events from being scheduled on religious holidays. She also serves as a board member at She Votes Illinois, a statewide political action organization, where she created a youth voter guide for eighty high schools. After high school, Shreya plans to study public policy and business before attending law school.

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Miriam Tsegay, a senior at Bolingbrook High School, serves as a student member on the Valley View District School Board where she has introduced ideas such as providing a sports psychologist for high school athletes and the band, as well as implementing college preparation classes. She has interned for her local representative, Illinois Deputy Majority Leader Natalie Manley and served as a United States Senate page, sponsored by Senator Tammy Duckworth. Miriam currently serves as secretary general for her school's Model UN club, plays on the girls' varsity soccer team, and competes on the speech team. She is a Children's Ministry volunteer at Calvary Church on the weekends where she spends time with children from diverse backgrounds. After graduating, Miriam would like to study international affairs and public policy to pursue a career in public service.

Chosen as alternates to the 2025 program were Mr. Parker Johnson, a resident of Benton, who attends Benton Consolidated High School and Mr. Victor Hinojosa, a resident of Waukegan, who attends Waukegan 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 Illinois delegates and alternates were designated by Dr. Tony Sanders, State Superintendent of Education.

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 6,200 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; Representative Sarah McBride, the second alumna to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; 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, and former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, the first alumna to be elected governor.

Members of the U. S. Senate Youth Program 2025 annual Senate Advisory Committee are: Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina, the 2025 USSYP Republican Co-Chair and Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the 2025 USSYP Democratic Co-Chair. The full USSYP Senate Advisory Committee includes the vice president of the United States and the Senate majority and minority leaders, and four senators from each party who lend their names in support. Serving on the 2025 Advisory Committee: Senator Susan M. Collins of Maine, Senator John Cornyn of Texas, Senator Jerry Moran of Kansas, Senator Pete Ricketts of Nebraska, Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada, Senator Tina Smith of Minnesota and Senator Peter Welch of Vermont.

**For more information please visit: [www.ussenateyouth.org](http://www.ussenateyouth.org)**

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