



AACS Youth Legislative Training Conference—2023

The AACCS hosted its annual Youth Legislative Training Conference from June 26 to 30, 2023. This year, 32 high school students from 21 states gathered in Washington, D.C., to learn about a Christian political worldview, to sharpen their leadership skills, and to forge lifelong friendships. Conference highlights included a mock senate, a Congressional briefing in the U.S. Capitol, meetings with Congressional offices, insights from top conservative leaders, and tours of some of our nation's historic sites.

The mock senate provided each student the opportunity to role-play a current senator and participate in one of four committees. Under the instruction of Mrs. Gail Nicholas, a 5-Diamond coach in the National Speech and Debate Association, the students crafted legislation, led committee meetings, debated the bills, and voted on their peers' legislation. Through this experience, the students learned Senate procedure and the confidence to engage in the political process.

The week included a "Day on the Hill" where students were privileged to attend a special Congressional Briefing in the U.S. Capitol and hear from prominent Hill staffers who share Christian values and are working to protect the cause of freedom. These speakers included Ted Ellis, Coalitions and Member Services Director for the House Republican Study Committee; Noah Jackson, a legislative clerk for the House Committee on Energy and Commerce; Jim Neill, the Senior Policy Advisor for Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell; Dr. Charmaine Yoest, the Executive Director of the House Values Action Team; and Rachel Bovard, the Executive Director of the Senate Steering Committee. At the close of each presentation, a student had the opportunity to pray for these leaders who are in key staffing positions on Capitol Hill.

Throughout the week, the students also heard from other speakers, including Tim Goeglein, Vice President of External and Government Relations for Focus on the Family, who emphasized the importance of Christianity in preserving our freedom. Additional speakers included Leadership Institute personnel, including Ryan Brann, Director of Communications Training, and Dena Espenscheid, Senior Director of Coalitions. A highlight of the week was our "YLTC Alumni Panel," which featured D.C. professionals Luke Ball, Peter Holland, and Nicole White, who participated in the YLTC during their high school and college years. They challenged students to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way and spoke about the role of faith in making a difference in the political world.

Other highlights of the week included watching the Marine Corps Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial and touring the Library of Congress. The students also enjoyed an evening monument tour which featured the Lincoln, Jefferson, Vietnam War, Korean War, and WWII memorials, and the Washington Monument. The week culminated with a visit to Arlington National Cemetery where four exemplary YLTC students were awarded the honor of representing AACCS by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

We are grateful for an incredible week and pray for God's blessing and guidance for the students. The AACCS is grateful for the volunteers, donors, and chaperones who made this year's YLTC a success. For pictures of the week, please visit our Facebook page (@AACSEduates) or our YLTC Instagram account (@yltc_aacs).