



## **NJDOE News**

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**For Release: December 12, 2005**

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### **Students from Union and Washington Township to Participate in Senate Youth Program**

High school students from Union and Washington Township have been selected to participate in a national program that brings together talented students with outstanding leadership abilities.

Elizabeth Duffy, a senior at Union High School and Christen Mason, a senior at Washington Township High School (Gloucester County), will represent New Jersey at the 2006 U.S. Senate Youth program, sponsored by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and administered by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Elizabeth and Christen were selected from among 160 New Jersey applicants. They will spend the week of March 4, 2006 in Washington, DC, where they will participate in a variety of activities designed to nurture their love of government and hone their leadership skills.

"High schools throughout New Jersey have always shown a strong level of participation in this program," said Acting Governor Richard J. Codey. "It is so critically important for our nation to develop future leaders in government. I congratulate Christen and Elizabeth on their success and I wish them well as they prepare for their futures."

"New Jersey's representatives for the upcoming U.S. Senate Youth Program have amassed such an impressive array of accomplishments," said Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "I join their teachers, friends and families in congratulations on achieving this high honor, and in wishing them continued success."

Elizabeth Duffy is a straight-A student who plans to enter college next year to begin studying towards a degree in engineering and an eventual career at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

"I view youth leadership as the most important asset of education," said Duffy in the essay portion of her application. "This is what builds strong character, molds students into scholars and creates world leaders."

Christen Mason is also a straight-A student who is currently enrolled in six advanced placement courses in Washington Township High School. She is planning to attend college, where she will major in political science or government and she intends to go to law school before embarking on a career in government service.

In her application essay, Christen wrote that participation in the program would "give me the ability to learn about government and the chance to work toward fulfilling my goal, but it would also give me an experience that would enable me to foster the values (such as honesty and hard work) that I have gained from my grandfather."

The United States Senate Youth Program is in its 44th year. Each state is invited to select two high school students, and two alternates, to attend the week-long program. The students each receive a \$5,000 scholarship and all expenses in Washington are covered. The program is open to public and private schools.

DOE administers the participant selection process in New Jersey. Once applications are distributed and collected, the department convenes a panel of experts in social studies and government and selects the students based on the following criteria: leadership qualities, academic standing, community involvement and clarity in speech and thought.

The alternate students selected for this year's program are Matthew Applegate of Marlton, a senior at Cherokee High School, and Erin Donohue, a junior at Howell High School.