

Candidates for Governor



Kearra Grisby

High School: St. Joseph's Academy

Youth and Gov Activities: President of the Senate, Bill made it to plenary at LEG 2022, CONA '23, NJC '22

School Activities: President of Literary Ladies Club (book club), Swim Team, VP of MUN in YAG, Beta Member, SJA, Student Ambassador, National Honors Society

Honors and Awards: Service Award, Academic Letter freshman & sophomore, Lettered in swim '22, Scholastic Art Award '22 Gold Key

Why do you want to serve in this position?

One of my mentors freshman year was the Governor, Olivia Mack. During my freshman year I felt incredibly lost and lonely, going into high school with no friends. The only thing that was certain was me joining YAG. Joining Youth and Government was the best decision I have ever made in my high school career. Youth and Government has opened up a world of possibilities and opportunities for me. Most importantly, YAG has helped me connect with some of my best friends and given me the most confidence. The bonds I have formed through YAG are the same bonds I want to create with every delegate at conference. YAG and every person involved has helped me in my life. I want every delegate to experience the same bonds, confidence, and joy I felt through LEG. I can only hope that as Governor, those experiences may be felt by every delegate.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

I would like to reform Louisiana schools. Louisiana has ranked in the lower 40's since I have been living here. Every day on the news there are multiple stories on our school system. My dad, who works at McKinley High School, tells me every day about the expulsion hearings he has to go to, the fights he has to break up, and the kids with great potential who are expelled. From an outsider's perspective, Louisiana schools are not focused on education or preparing students for their futures. Instead Louisiana schools seem to be preparing children for a life with little growth, snatching children's futures away before they even leave school. Louisiana schools are wasting the potential of our state's great young minds. Change will not happen in Louisiana if we continue to disregard our youth.

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

If I could have one item on a deserted island it would probably be my favorite book "Black Out." When I first read the book, it became an instant favorite. I haven't had the time to annotate it, so I feel like being on a deserted island would be the perfect excuse to do so. A book just seems like the perfect choice you can do anything and read.



Sela Alwood

Parkway Baptist School

Youth and Gov Activities: 3rd year doing Youth Leg and 2nd doing MUN, 1 year at CONA, Senate Floor Leader on LEG state board, President of Parkview YAG

High School Activities: Beta club committee chair, Mu Alpha Theta member, ICARE Ambassador, PBS Volleyball, Fellowship of Christian Athletes Group Leader

Honors and Awards: 1st place at School and Regional Science fair, Charism Award for French I and English II H, 30+ Club Award

Why do you want to serve in this position?

I believe I would make conference a more collaborative and generally safe space for delegates to voice their opinions. I believe fun and work belong together as long as work comes first. I love this conference, and it's become like a home to me. It would be the greatest honor to be able to give back in such a meaningful way and touch as many people as possible.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

I would like to see mental health reformation in Louisiana, especially in school systems and work places. Because mental healthcare is so costly, many low income children and adults cannot access it due to lack of insurance and resources. Many adults cannot afford to miss work or take days off for personal benefit, even in cases of mental health. Louisiana is currently ranked 49th in the country for mental healthcare and the lack of insurance and services available for kids and adults alike that are in need is an issue that needs immediate address. I am currently part of a team that advocates for mental health and against suicide in the school systems in Louisiana and am taking fighting the mental health crisis one step at a time.

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

I would probably choose a thneed because of how purely versatile it is. It would keep me warm, be a hammock to sleep in, be a net to catch things in, and so much more.

Candidates for Speaker of the House



Allison Riley

High School: St. Joseph’s Academy

Youth and Gov Activities: Boys and Girls Club Youth Legislature 2022 (with signed law), YMCA Youth Legislature 2022 (with signed law and Supreme Court challenge), YMCA Model UN 2023 (Representing the DPR of North Korea with passed resolution), MUN 2023 Delegation Council

School Activities: President of Quiz Bowl, Secretary of the Jane Austen Association, member of Schola Choir, Beta Club, Creative Writers' Club, Science Club, and Mu Alpha Theta

Honors and Awards: The 1868 Award (School scholarship), The 2023 Sister Joan LaPlace Good Works Award (school), school's community service award, academic letter, Scholastic Writing Awards 2022 & 2023

Why do you want to serve in this position?

To be a mediating, productive member of State Board and to advance an environment that allows for inclusion, growth, and expression.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

The child illiteracy and poverty rates in Louisiana are far too high. In 2019, less than half of our third graders were on-level for literacy, which decreased in 2020 and 2021, and decreased again this year. In certain parishes, primarily poorer ones like Claiborne (where the median income is \$29,574), these illiteracy rates stretch far beyond childhood, leaving 36% of adults not literate. Considering that illiteracy can increase poverty, mental health issues, incarceration rates, and violent crime, this issue shouldn't be an issue at all and should have been dealt with a long time ago.

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

A pet turtle (named Wilson) because he will outlive me, and if he doesn't, I know how to make turtle sauce piquante.



Miniya Malone

Episcopal School of Baton Rouge
Youth and Gov Activities: Member of Louisiana CONA delegation (2023); House Floor Leader on 2023 SB
High School Activities: Select Choir, Quiz Bowl, Mu Alpha Theta (Tournament Chair), International Thespian Society, Youth Legislature, Model UN
Honors and Awards: Rhodes College Book Award, Award of Excellence (Honors Chemistry, AP U.S. History, Honors Algebra II, Spanish III, Honors Geometry, + English I), Award of Merit (Honors Biology, Spanish I, + Concert Band), Gold Medal, National Spanish Exam (x2), 3rd Place Individual (Mu Alpha Theta State Convention, Algebra II)

Why do you want to serve in this position?

I want to serve as Speaker of the House to help new delegates grow their passion for government and gain the confidence to express their opinions both in and out of conference, no matter how scary it may seem. I have never been a very extroverted person, and it took me a long time to get to where I am now in Youth and Government. Public speaking and debating can be terrifying, I speak from experience. When I was a freshman, my heart started beating 100mph and my hands started shaking every time I stood up to speak. However, through the guidance of amazing chairs who saw my struggles and encouraged me, I grew into a confident speaker that is never afraid to voice my opinion. I know that as Speaker of the House I can do that for other delegates, and allow more delegates to let their voices be heard, because everyone's opinion is important and worth hearing.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

One issue that is very important to me which I would like to change is a lack of civics education. This was the topic of my Youth Leg bill from last year, "Educate Young Voters". I wholeheartedly believe that our future is in the hands of us, the young generation, but we can only encourage major change when we educate ourselves on what is happening within our government. When students are fully educated about the makings of our governmental system, they have the means to come up with the solutions to change that system for the better. Therefore, by prioritizing civics education within our school systems, we give youth the ability to be agents for change, benefitting both our local communities and our society at large.

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

I would bring a fully fueled helicopter equipped with an instruction manual (for obvious purposes).



Avishka Fernando

High School: Haynes Academy
Youth and Gov Activities: General Assembly Presiding Officer
High School Activities: Swim Team, Band, Mock Trials, Student Council
Honors and Awards: Music National Honor Society, NAHS

Why do you want to serve in this position?

I want to be a role model for Youth and government, and want to be active in making conference and our club fun and exciting.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

The Housing Crissis and Homeless Population

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

A crayon because I can use it was a candle, i could eat it, and use it to write messages for help. If you try hard enough, it can also be used used as a weapon.

Candidates for President of the Senate



Hannah Champagne

High School: St. Joseph’s Academy
Youth and Gov Activities: Delegates at Youth LEG in 2021 and 2022, Speaker of the House for 2023. Delegate at MUN 2022 and 2023. Delegate at CONA 2022 and Conference Life Committee Member 2023. SJA YAG President for the 2023-2024 academic year
High School Activities: Film Club, Drama Club, French Club, French Honors Club, Youth And Government, Art Club, Literary Ladies, Criminal Justice, Diversity Club, Green Team, Science Club, Mu Alpha Theta, St. Joseph’s Academy Ambassador, National Honors Society
Honors and Awards: Some of my achievements are having my first ever bill and resolution pass and LEG and MUN, having my 2022 bill pass in plenary, attending CONA, 100+ service hours, a charisma award in my Civics class, and the Academic Distinction Award my school. I was recently awarded outstanding participant in Washington D.C. and was asked to change the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Why do you want to serve in this position?

I would like to be your 2024 President of the Senate because I would like to help maintain and create a safe place for delegates to express their opinions, be themselves, and learn about current political events. Being the Speaker of the House has guided me on how to improve this conference, and becoming President of the Senate would allow me to continue to improve it.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

I would like to change the culture surrounding education. Louisiana is notorious for its poor education system, which is partly due to low funding and laws regarding education. I believed money needs to be reallocated to increase school budgets to incentivize teachers to work there. Also, Louisiana should stop passing laws that prevent education that discusses LGBTQ+ content and banning books in school libraries.

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

I would bring a Swiss Army Knife because it's an adaptable tool that could help me in a variety of situations. If I need to file my nails, there's a nail filer. If I need to cut something, there's scissors. If I need to open a bottle, there's a corkscrew. It's practical but resourceful.



Brinkley Bennett

High School: St. Joseph's Academy

Youth and Gov Activities: Boys and Girls Club Youth Legislature, YMCA Youth Legislature, YMCA Model United Nations

High School Activities: Youth & Government Club, Drama Club, Art Club, Cooking and Crafts Club, Beta Club, Spanish Club, Mu Alpha Theta Club

Honors and Achievements: Honor Student, Athletic Award, Charism Award

Why do you want to serve in this position?

To develop new leadership skills and use them to facilitate productive discussions, foster a collaborative environment, and get involved in the democratic process.

What is one major issue in our state you would like to change?

Expand access of quality healthcare for low-income families.

If you could have one item on a deserted island, what would you choose and why?

A boat.