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ALABAMA YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT

Media program is here to serve you; Use us please!

By Ellie Cotton
2015 Editor in Chief



ELLIE COTTON

I am more than honored to serve as your editor in chief for this year's Alabama Youth in Government program. I am excited to reunite with those I don't see often and learn new ideas and skills I will carry with me for years to come.

The media program's goal is to give you a glance of everything this weekend has in store. If you can't be in the House or Senate, don't worry because we are. Don't know what the Supreme Court does during Youth Legislature? We will tell

you. Not sure about the lobbyists' role? We've got the scoop. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter, like us on Facebook and read our blog because our main focus is always YOU!

My goal for myself for this weekend is to be decisive, bold and committed!

Let's work together to make this Youth Legislature the best yet!

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TomorrowTODAY

Building Tomorrow's Leaders TODAY

Speak, listen, remain open and accept fellow delegates, governor says

By Cassie Sadie
2015 Youth Governor

Welcome to Alabama's 67th Youth Legislature! Thank you all so much for being here and for all the hard work you've put in and will put in to make this conference the best possible.

Over the next few days, you will discover countless new perspectives and ideas. You will make new friends and gain skills that will accompany you for the rest of your life. I encourage you to fully embrace everything that the conference throws at you. Seize every moment from every handshake to every speech opportunity. Step up and let your voice be heard.

Just as I encourage you to speak, I encourage you also to listen. You will hear delegates share viewpoints from every corner of Alabama, often



Cassie Sadie of Montgomery takes the oath of office after winning the youth governor's race in 2014.

challenging your own beliefs. These differences make us strong, for together we can create change that would otherwise be impossible. Respect and tolerance bind us together and allow the free flow of ideas to enlighten us all.

Remain open and accepting to your fellow delegates – you may be surprised by what you learn.

I look forward to meeting or getting to know you all better and to seeing you all in action! Have a great weekend!

Q & A with 2016 gubernatorial candidates

The TomorrowTODAY staff asked each candidate the same three questions. Read their responses below:



WILLIAM CHANDLER

Alabama's prisons are overcrowded. Would you advocate releasing prisoners early, sending fewer to prison or another solution?

William Chandler: Alabama spends \$43 a day per inmate to house its prisoners, compared to a national average of more than \$70 a day. This level of funding is insufficient to fund rehabilitation programs that help keep former inmates from returning to prison. Improving our rehabilitation programs would help reincorporate former inmates into society, which would cut down on the overcrowding of our prisons tremendously by more than 400 prisoners yearly.

Sam Hubbard: We could make the sentences shorter, but also less 'enjoyable' so we don't lose effectiveness; or we could redo the budget and build more prisons.

Noah McNelley: I propose that the Department of Corrections draft a proposal for prison consolidation. I would allow criminals who have committed misdemeanors or less serious crimes to be released on terms of good behavior with the mandate of behavior correction courses after the prisoners are released. There is not a perfect definitive answer but allowing prisoners to cycle out of the prison systems and reside in a facility to rehabilitate them would be most effective.

Full answers available at alyig.org/blog



SAM HUBBARD

Should people who have been committed or treated for a mental illness, be allowed to receive a gun permit?

Sam Hubbard: Not while committed, no, but when treated, as soon as the psychologist declares the treatment successful, they're no longer considered sick, so yes.

Noah McNelley: The Second Amendment and gun rights are extremely important, but those people who have any indication of a mental disability should not be allowed have a gun permit. Although people kill people and it's not guns that kill people, taking certain people out of the equation could only help ensure safety.

William Chandler: Currently, those who fall into the four categories of mental illness cannot own a gun. Those who: are a danger to themselves and/or others; have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution; have court orders and commitment to mental institutions, which can either be voluntary or involuntary; or have been committed without the necessity of a court's input. Currently, Alabama does not have any written laws or federal standards on those who have/had mental illness, so the burden then falls on gun seller. It is for the safety of the citizens of Alabama that we should not allow those who have been diagnosed with mental illness in any way shape or form own a firearm.



NOAH MCNELLEY

What one aspect of Alabama's Youth in Government program you would change?

Noah McNelley: I would try to strengthen the involvement of the First Year Program. I want to provide opportunities for the First Year delegates to be involved with all of the other delegates in the House and Senate. I would like to have a "Buddy System" where First Year delegates have delegates in the House of Senate that they could ask questions or sit with during regular chamber. The First Year delegates are the future of this program and providing them the best conference possible is of utmost importance.

William Chandler: My entire focus as governor is to improve the expansion of the YMCA Youth and Government Program by getting more schools involved. With the help of the district chairs, we will pinpoint a dozen or so schools that fit the YMCA's standards within their own respective districts. Within the first few months of next school year, I will visit each of these schools, give a presentation and hopefully recruit these schools into the program. It is something I am genuinely passionate about and I will see it through to the end!

Sam Hubbard: The program is already great, but I'd love it if the Supreme Court gave majority and minority opinions!

Full answers available at alyig.org/blog

