

**AACCS**American Association  
of Christian SchoolsA National Voice Helping You  
Educate for Eternity.

## **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Legislative Training Conference – 2010**

*The AACCS 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Legislative Training Conference was held July 20-24, 2010, and gave students from Christian schools across the nation a “hands-on” experience of the workings of Washington, DC. The report below from the AACCS Legislative Office highlights the events of the week.*

Every year the events of the Youth Legislative Training Conference (YLTC) remind us of God’s goodness and faithfulness. He constantly blesses our efforts to encourage Christian youth of America to make a difference in politics not only for conservative values, but also to advance the Word of God in our government.

This year’s YLTC began on Tuesday, July 20, with Senate expert Mrs. Gail Nicholas, American Government teacher at Bob Jones Academy, introducing the students to the workings of the Senate and the legislative process in preparation for the Mock Senate that the students participated in. For the Mock Senate, each student role-played an actual Senator, which involved meeting in committees, drafting legislation on the issue of national security, and then participating in the final debate and vote at the end of the week. This week, over 30 bills and resolutions were proposed and put on the Senate calendar to be debated. However, only a few actually made it to the “Senate floor,” including a bill to build a wall along the American border, a bill to establish a national I.D. card, a resolution addressing the situation of “anchor babies” born to illegal immigrants, and a bill to protect America by the bombing of Iran. Needless to say, these students had done their homework, and the debate was quite passionate on these issues!

In addition to the Mock Senate, students were also kept busy with tours, meeting their Representatives and Senators, and listening to excellent speakers. Wednesday was our “Day on the Hill” when the students attended a Congressional briefing in the Capitol building, met with their own Representatives and Senators in the afternoon, and then enjoyed a private after-hours tour of the Capitol hosted by Rep. Jim Jordan (OH-4<sup>th</sup>) and led by his executive assistant, Melissa Evans, a Christian school graduate. During the Congressional briefing, students heard from five Representatives and one Senator: Sen. Jim DeMint (SC), Rep. Virginia Foxx (NC-5<sup>th</sup>), Rep. Trent Franks (AZ-2<sup>nd</sup>), Rep. Joe Pitts (PA-16<sup>th</sup>), Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO-5<sup>th</sup>), and Rep. Michele Bachmann (MN-6<sup>th</sup>). Each of these Members of Congress spoke to the students about their personal lives in politics and their knowledge of current national security issues. It was especially encouraging to hear them each boldly declare their faith and how it comes first in both their personal and political lives. Following each speaker, we took the time for one of our students to stand and pray for God’s

strength, wisdom, and protection for that particular Member. What a great and humbling opportunity for our students to pray for our leaders.

A unique feature of the YLTC is that the students have an immediate opportunity to become politically active on Capitol Hill. Each student was able to represent numerous Christians and conservatives as they hand-delivered letters to the offices of every Senator on behalf of AACS and the Judicial Crisis Network. Each organization's letter was slightly different but had the same message to the Senators: oppose the nomination of Elena Kagan to the Supreme Court. God's hand was evident in this situation, allowing the YLTC to fall only a couple weeks before the confirmation vote of Miss Kagan to the Court. The students were able to have a first-hand impact on the debate and the controversy surrounding this important issue.

Special speakers throughout the week included AACS President, Dr. Keith Wiebe on the choices that leaders must make, Mr. Morton Blackwell, founder of the Leadership Institute, on the importance of a strong, conservative youth in politics, and Mr. Chuck Nicholas, speech and debate coach from Bob Jones Academy, on public speaking and debate. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-5<sup>th</sup>), a Christian school graduate, shared her testimony on Tuesday evening on how the Lord led her into politics. For the Wednesday evening devotional, former Navy chaplain, Capt. Wayne Bley, spoke to the students from Psalm 108. Other special speakers included Mrs. Amy Sechler, program specialist for the Office of Non-Public Education, who spoke to the students about how to make a difference after a bill becomes a law, and Mr. Frank Gaffney, founder and president of the Center for Security Policy, who addressed our "Senators" on the threat of Islamic Sharia law to our national security. The Friday evening banquet speaker was Mr. Ryan Messmore, William E. Simon Fellow from The Heritage Foundation, who challenged and encouraged the students on the Christian's responsibility in the area of social justice. The week ended on Saturday morning with two speakers wrapping up the conference: Miss Sarah Griffith, AACS Legislative Assistant, on "Internships" and Mr. Ned Ryn, president of the American Majority, on keeping an eternal perspective and focus on God in everything that we do. Both the students and teachers were impacted by the practical and inspiring messages from all the speakers.

The week of the conference is always very busy, and it is amazing to see what the students were able to accomplish. In addition to the speakers, the Day on the Hill, and the mock Senate, they also were able to squeeze in several tours of historical sites in Washington, D.C. This year, the students had the opportunity to tour the Pentagon, the monuments, and Arlington National Cemetery. While at Arlington, four students were given the privilege of laying a wreath on behalf of AACS at the Tomb on the Unknown Soldier. It is a very moving and emotional experience, as the students are able to take part in honoring the men and women of our military. On the final evening, the students enjoyed the Sunset Parade at the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C. And that's not

all ... they also participated in a scavenger photo shoot on Capitol Hill, and still found time to eat, sleep, and have daily devotions.

After an arduous yet motivating week, students parted ways, thanking God for His abundant provision in a profitable youth conference. We praise the Lord for the wonderful group of students He sent us this year, and we pray that they will continue making a difference for the cause of righteousness with the things they learned while in D.C.

*This article was written by Hilary Ranieri, AACS Intern and YLTC 2007 alumnus. Hilary is currently a junior at Bob Jones University, pursuing a degree in Political Science. She plans to pursue a career in politics or law, eventually working in Washington, DC.*

\* We are grateful to all of our generous donors that made this remarkable event possible and allowed the students to come to Washington, D.C. on a full scholarship. A special thanks goes to our corporate sponsor, the [Worthwhile Company](#), for their generous support in this cause. If you would like to invest in the training of our future leaders through the Youth Legislative Training Conference, please [Click Here](#).