



## **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Legislative Training Conference—2013**

*The AACCS 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Legislative Training Conference was held July 9-13, 2013, and gave students from Christian schools across the nation a hands-on experience of the workings of Washington, D.C. The report below from the AACCS Legislative Office highlights the events of the week.*

For 19 years God's faithfulness and steadfast goodness have been on display during the AACCS Youth Legislative Training Conference. He continues to bless the efforts of AACCS to encourage and motivate Christian youth to make a difference in politics for conservative Christian values and issues and to advance the Word of God in the laws and public policy of our country.

This year's conference began with an exciting introduction to the mock Senate, led by Gail Nicholas, an American government teacher at Bob Jones Academy. During the mock Senate, the students role-played Senators, which involved going to committee meetings, drafting legislation on the issue of immigration, and then debating and voting on their bills on the "Senate floor." This year, 28 pieces of legislation were drafted, but only 8 bills made it to the Senate floor for debate.

Throughout the week, students also met with their Representatives and Senators, listened to inspiring conservative experts, and participated in tours of historical sites in Washington. On Wednesday, the students were able to experience "A Day on the Hill" with an exclusive AACCS Congressional briefing in the Rayburn House Office Building. Nine members of the House of Representatives participated in this year's briefing: Louie Gohmert (TX), Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA), Doug Lamborn (CO), Tim Huelskamp (KS), Diane Black (TN), Jim Jordan (OH), Trent Franks (AZ), Vicky Hartzler (MO) and David Schweikert (AZ). Many of the Congressmen and women spoke about how their faith in God has led them to where they are and about seeking His guidance to make the best decisions, even when facing adversity. Students prayed for God's wisdom and guidance for each of the Representatives after they spoke.

On Wednesday evening, the students enjoyed an after-hours tour of the Capitol. The tour was hosted by Rep. Jeff Duncan (SC), who also led the students in prayer in the Members' Chapel. Melissa Evans, executive assistant to Rep. Jim Jordan (OH) and former AACCS teacher, served as a tour guide and pointed out architectural details that illustrate our rich religious heritage. Students also visited the old Senate and Supreme Court chambers. This year, for the first time during a YLTC tour, students raised their voices in song in the Capitol Rotunda, giving a stirring rendition of "Amazing Grace."

Special guests who spoke throughout the week included AACS President Dr. Keith Wiebe, Focus on the Family Vice President of External Relations Tim Goeglein, Bob Jones Academy Speech and Debate teacher Chuck Nicholas, and Judge David Gustafson, who serves as one of nineteen Federal tax judges in the country. They spoke about how to be an effective Christian while involved in politics and government and how faith impacts their decisions. Students also heard from speakers from the Leadership Institute (LI) where the conference was held. LI speakers included General Services Management Advisor Ian Ivey, LI Deputy Field Director Mike Armstrong, Roncalli Communications President Dr. John Shosky, and LI Vice President of Development Steve Sutton. A Wednesday evening devotional was shared by Captain Wayne Bley, Chairman of FBFI Commission of Chaplains and former advisor to the Pentagon on the religious elements of the Global War on Terror.

On Friday evening, the students attended a special banquet where they were privileged to hear from Austin Nimocks, Chief Legal Counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom. He was presented an award by AACS for his commitment to defend marriage and preserve religious liberty. After receiving his award, he spoke to the students, encouraging them not to back away from the truth and to stand firmly against those who seek to redefine traditional morality.

Throughout the week students participated in a variety of exciting activities. This year, they had the opportunity to tour the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which gave them a better understanding of how genocide and oppressive governments have driven immigrants to seek refuge in America. Also, Dr. Tim Schmig, executive director of the Michigan Association of Christian Schools, conducted an informative tour of the various monuments while pointing out our country's religious heritage around D.C. On Friday evening, after a week of being separated by political parties in their mock Senate, the students came together for a game of government trivia, a photo scavenger hunt, an ice cream social, and a time of reflection and praise to God for the events of the week.

On Saturday morning, the students made one last stop before heading home: Arlington National Cemetery. During the changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the students paid their respects to those who have died for our freedoms. They also visited the Robert E. Lee Home and the gravesite of President John F. Kennedy.

We praise the Lord for the great group of students He sent us this year, and we pray that they will continue making a difference for the cause of righteousness. We are excited to continue preparing more young people for His service as we look forward to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AACS Youth Leadership Training Conference next year.

*This article was written by Lee B. Miller, AACS intern. Lee is a 2009 YLTC alumnus and a recent graduate of Bob Jones University, where he received a Journalism/Mass Communication degree.*

\* 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](#).