



20th Annual Youth Legislative Training Conference—2014

The 20th Annual AACCS Youth Legislative Training Conference was held July 7–11, 2014, 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.

This year's Youth Legislative Training Conference marked two decades of God's faithfulness to this important program. Over the years, God has continually blessed the efforts of AACCS as we work to inspire Christian students to be involved in politics and to advance Biblical truths in the laws and policies that form our government.

Gail Nicholas, an American government teacher at Bob Jones Academy, started the conference off by introducing the students to the mock Senate. Always a highlight of the conference, the mock Senate allowed students to role-play Senators. The "Senators" went to committee meetings, drafted legislation, debated and finally voted on their bills on the "Senate floor."

During the week, students were also able to meet with their Representatives and Senators and participate in tours of some of the historical sites in Washington. On Tuesday, the students experienced "A Day on the Hill" that began with an AACCS Congressional briefing on the House side of the Capitol Visitors Center. The students were able to hear from a variety of speakers including Rep. Jim Bridenstine (OK), Josh Duggar from Family Research Council, Tom McClusky from March for Life, along with Capitol Hill staffers Caleb Paxton from Rep. Jeff Duncan's (SC) office and Amy Vitale from Rep. Randy Forbes's (VA) office. Each of the speakers talked about a Christian's role in government and what the students could do to influence the culture from a conservative standpoint. Jamison Coppola, Legislative Director at AACCS, prayed with each speaker, asking God for guidance and wisdom for each of them as they further His work.

Rep. Jeff Duncan (SC) led the students on an after-hours tour of the Capitol on Tuesday concluding "A Day on the Hill." Throughout the tour Rep. Duncan told the students about the architectural details in the Capitol demonstrating our country's rich religious heritage. The students were able to visit the Congressional Prayer Chamber as well as the speaker's balcony directly outside of Speaker John Boehner's office. A very inspiring part of the tour was when the students, encouraged by Rep. Duncan, joined in singing "Amazing Grace" in the Capitol rotunda.

Special guests who spoke throughout the week included Morton Blackwell, President of The Leadership Institute, Focus on the Family Vice President of External Relations Tim Goeglein, Roncalli Communications President Dr. John Shosky, and Bob Jones Academy Speech and Debate teacher Chuck Nicholas. Each speaker told of how he became politically involved, the way in which his faith impacts his decisions, and ways to be an effective voice in the conservative movement. Students were also able to hear from a technology panel about the methods in which technology could be used to further conservative messages. The panel included Drew Belsky, Communications Director from Live Action, Digital Video Producer Danielle Saul from The Leadership Institute and the Home School Legal Defense Alliance's Director of Film and Visual Media Ian Reid.

On Thursday evening, the students had the privilege of attending a special banquet where they heard from Elizabeth Wiebe, Vice President for Engagement at Christian Alliance for Orphans, who challenged them to live out true Christianity both in politics and society. After the banquet, students came together to play a game of government trivia, participate in a photo scavenger hunt, eat delicious ice cream, and testify of God's work in their lives throughout the conference.

Throughout the week students participated in a variety of exciting tours. This year, they had the opportunity to tour the Library of Congress where, among many other things, they saw a Gutenberg Bible and Thomas Jefferson's book collection. Among the activities that took place was a monument tour conducted by Dr. Tim Schmig, Executive Director of the Michigan Association of Christian Schools. Throughout the tour, Dr. Schmig pointed out interesting details about the monuments and our country's godly heritage.

On the final day of the conference, before returning home, the students made a trip to Arlington National Cemetery. The top four students in YLTC, voted on by the chaperones and their peers, had the distinct honor of participating in a wreath laying ceremony on behalf of AACS at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to pay their respects to those who died for our freedom. Additionally, they had the chance to visit the gravesite of President John F. Kennedy and the home of General Robert E. Lee.

It is our prayer that the students the Lord sent us will continue to make an impact on our country for the cause of Christ. AACS looks forward to continuing to prepare and equip more young people for God's work and seeing how alumni of YLTC will impact the conservative movement.

This article was written by Summer E. Goff, AACS Intern. Summer is a 2011 YLTC alumnus and a junior at Valdosta State University, where she is a double major in Economics and Finance.

* 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. If you would like to invest in the training of our future leaders through the Youth Legislative Training Conference, please [Click here](#).