



**THE HENRY CLAY CENTER
FOR STATESMANSHIP**

What is the High School Student Congress?

The week-long student congress gathers fifty rising high school seniors together with lawmakers, academics, journalists and business leaders to learn about the political legacy of Kentucky's greatest statesman, Henry Clay, and how to apply this legacy in every aspect of their academic and professional activities. Carefully chosen guest speakers engage with students throughout the week, which culminates in a political simulation designed by the Henry Clay Center staff and our university partners.

Each year's program invites students to focus on a different dimension of politics and public policy, informed by the experiences of Henry Clay. Previous years' program topics have included:

- Henry Clay as legislator and Speaker of the House, during which students authored, debated and voted on Constitutional amendments
- Henry Clay as diplomat and Secretary of State, during which students participated in an international conflict negotiation simulation
- Henry Clay as negotiator and orator, during which students researched and debated questions in the U.S. immigration debate



No matter the theme of the program, students will be challenged to interact with peers who hold different beliefs than they do, to civilly and openly engage in dialogue about their differences, to learn to listen to one another, and, ultimately, to come together in a spirit of cooperation in order to achieve progress for the common good.



Rising High School Seniors (juniors during the 2020-2021 school year)



There is NO cost to apply for or attend the student congress



Hosted in Lexington, Kentucky



Online Applications due by February 22, 2021

2019 Participant Testimonials

"This was by far one of the best academic and most enjoyable experiences I have ever had. It not only opened my eyes to the problems our society is facing in a fantastic way, it also led to many lasting friendships."

"We were pushed to see beyond politics and party and instead look towards compromise and solution. My understanding of government expanded from how our government works to how our government should work."

"Easily one of the best weeks of my life. Not only did it increase my passion for public service and politics, but I also met amazing people from across the nation who I am happy to call my friends."

What Makes the Student Congress Unique?

At the student congress, it's all about the process. While students will have opportunities to develop tangible policy solutions and recommendations, we challenge participants to engage with the mechanisms by which these solutions are achieved. *Why do you hold the opinion that you do? How do you engage with someone who holds the opposite opinion? What are your areas of mutual interest?* Through this emphasis on cooperation, understanding, statesmanship, dialogue, and leadership, we find that students are challenged not just to pass a bill or write a treaty, but to learn to understand differences, to adapt to different personalities, and to seek solutions that further the common good over individual or group agendas.

Why Should Students Apply?

Throughout the student congress, students will develop and hone their leadership, communication, negotiation and interpersonal skills, all while creating friendships and lasting bonds among the cohort of participants. The student congress is an excellent program to include on college applications, and its length and timing offers a great opportunity for students who cannot commit to summer-long programs. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to get an early taste of college life – they'll stay in a dormitory with a roommate, attend lectures in college classrooms, and utilize campus facilities.

Who Should Teachers Recommend?

While there is no standard template of a student congress participant, qualities of successful applicants may include the following:

- Record of academic excellence, as exemplified by GPA and standardized test scores
- Interest in public service
- Commitment to service and leadership
- Community and school involvement
- Participation in relevant coursework, such as Government, Economics and History



For More Information



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