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Junior State of America
presents a special seasonal
edition of its official newsletter...

THE JUNIOR STATEMENT

WINTER 2012-13 EDITION

IN THIS ISSUE...

JSA in China

JSA Fall State

Third Parties

Filibuster Reform

The DREAM Act

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Reforming the AP System

Debate of the Month

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT JSA
VISIT: **WWW.JSA.ORG**

Contact Editor-in-Chief, Anthony Kayruz,
at akayruz@jsa.org if interested in
submitting pieces for publication

November/December/January

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK

Dear Reader,

I would like to cordially welcome you to the Winter installment of the 2012-2013 *The Junior Statement*. *The Junior Statement* is a magazine that is sent to tax paid JSA members and teacher advisers across the nation and is publicly available for viewing online through the national JSA website. Its contents consist of student-written submissions that range from reports about JSA events, conventions, and chapters to general opinion articles about divisive issues.

The Junior Statement aims to increase political, cultural, and social awareness in an effort to promote civic engagement and social justice in America's youth. The Winter Edition includes articles that respond to the past election between President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney, essays about Middle East relations, and reports that recapture important JSA moments from the past two months.

However, there may be a topic of importance to you that is not covered in this month's release. If this is the case, I encourage you to voice your opinion about such an issue by writing and sending your work to *The Junior Statement*. Being included in *The Junior Statement* is an honor and simultaneously an opportunity that no politically interested young person should decline. I hope all of you take advantage of this outlet and submit pieces for publication.

Please contact me via email at akayruz@jsa.org if you are interested in contributing to *The Junior Statement*.

Sincerely,

Anthony Kayruz
Editor-in-Chief



*Most photos used in the Winter Edition were taken from the Internet and belong to their respective owners

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GOVERNORS' DESK

Dear Movers and Shakers,

Traditionally, I would address you as Junior Staters, but this year you have distinguished yourselves not only as statesmen but also as indomitable movers and shakers. There have been a myriad of accomplishments so far, and many more amazing feats are projected to occur.

So let me congratulate everyone on the following achievements:

- Increased Fall State attendance for the first time in four years
- Over 100 chapters held Debate Watch Parties
- On pace for 90% chapter retention from last year
- Projected to achieve 500 Tax Paid chapters, a 21% increase from last year
- At one point half of the Huffington Post youth articles were written by JSAsers

Honestly, it is no coincidence that our growth comes at the same time as an election year. As you all have observed, although every four years there is a presidential election, we need to continue to turn our historic efforts from a once-every-four-year phenomena into an every year phenomena.

At the Winter Council of Governors meeting, we decided that it will be our paramount goals to ensure that our chapters from last year grow and that we hit our goal of 500 chapters nationwide. But beyond that we also came to the consensus that more than ever, decisions are being made that effect us, the youth. Speaker John Boehner and Senator Harry Reid probably won't be around when Social Security and Medicare go bankrupt. But, guess who will be? Us. Democracy is not a spectator sport, and we have decided to take action. And that is why we are partnering with the bi-partisan group No Labels.

No Labels is working to bring Republicans and Democrats to meet regularly, to simply talk and discuss the issues facing our nation. They ask Americans to put behind their polarized party labels and work for America. No Labels has a Congressional Caucus of over 25 members, and the organization grows daily. JSA is working with No Labels to promote the idea of working on problem solving instead problem creating. We need your help in contacting and engaging your peers to "hit up" your Representative or Senator and get them to join the coalition. If we continue to work to better our nation, we will not be forgotten.

Signing Off,

Iman Baghai
Pacific Northwest Governor, Junior State of America



Access is Power

The Journey of a C-SPAN Intern

By Emma Jackson

Having access is having power. I learned this when I became an intern for C-SPAN during the 2012 Vice Presidential Debate held in my hometown of Danville, Kentucky.

I was chosen along with seven other students from the two high schools that serve our county. We were given media credentials and tasked with 'reporting, tweeting, and touting'. This in itself was an amazing opportunity, however, that was not the end of it. We also had access to the Media Filing Center as well as Spin Alley. These experiences provided me with invaluable experiences and helped me mold my future. I learned that being bold and audacious are some of the best tools a reporter has. Here is my story.

When I first found out about the opportunity, I was ecstatic. However, I had no idea what kind of preparation would be in store for us. Although I was an avid follower of the election and world affairs in general, I was immersed in a series of crash courses with the other students to prepare us for the debate. We learned everything we could about the plans and potential talking points of the debate as well as reporting techniques. I wanted to be as prepared as possible.

I was resolved to make a mini documentary for my portfolio about the whole experience. My

teachers and parents kept impressing upon me the true rarity of my opportunity. So what better way to truly appreciate it than to document it? I presented my idea to our gracious hosts at C-SPAN who encouraged me. This set me on a new course. I was determined to make this the best film I had ever made.

The day of the debate, I donned my lanyard with my credentials and walked a block from my house to the debate festival. I kept getting second glances and impressed looks from passersby. It took me a few minutes to realize that it was because of my credentials. These strangers supposed I was someone important. After all, I was part of the media. To regular people in small towns like Danville, being on TV means being famous. I now held the ability to make things happen, or so they thought. This gave me even more confidence, which would prove extremely useful later.

Finally, four o'clock came. I met up the other students at the C-SPAN bus to start our work. We had toured the bus the day before, yet the immense charter bus still captivated me. Inside were touch screen computers, TVs, and cameras that made this place an information hub. We were first tasked with interviewing the crowd that had gathered for the debate festival. I had never anticipated just how difficult it would be to interview people on the spot.

We asked fairly easy questions such as 'who will win the debate?' and 'What issue concerns you the most'. However, most people do not like being put on the spot. Finding good interviews proved to be a bit of work.

Dark approached, and the bands stopped playing. We headed back to the bus to watch the debate. It was empowering to be in a room of such informed students. We argued back and forth with the TV and had mini debates amongst ourselves. It was entertaining and enlightening to be with such a group of opinionated youth. Finally, the debate began to wrap up. With about five minutes to go, we left for the media filing center.

We stepped into an expansive room that was the size of two gymnasiums. Tables in two columns had been set up with rows and rows of computers and journalists at them tapping away furiously. Giant flat screens broadcasting the debate dotted the room. The room was filled with the sounds of typing and concentration. Yes, you could hear the concentration with every word the reporters typed. The room was the true hub of information.

Finally we ascended the stairs towards Spin Alley. This was what I had been most looking forward to the entire day. I felt as giddy as a child when I saw the open doors brimming with activity. Guards stood at the door credentialing people as they entered. There

was a sad entourage of adults and college students who did not have the proper credentials to enter the room waiting for any chance of meeting some of the luminaries of Spin Alley. For those not familiar with that terminology, Spin Alley is where all the action occurs after the debate. Any interview with a senator or reporter or representative of the party that is seen on

to describe that place, it would be organized chaos. Spin alley was completely full of people. Everywhere you look there were senators and TV cameras. College students held up large vertical signs with the names of senators on it. This was necessary if one had any goal whatsoever in mind. I got the opportunity of interviewing Senator Durbin from Illinois.

thought a daring move. I was overcome with a sense of power. I had access to this amazing event and I was going to take advantage of it.

Now that the debate is over, I realize I'd like to major in Media and Public Affairs mainly due to this experience. I am in the process of putting together my mini documentary. Looking back, I real-



TV after the debate all takes place in Spin Alley, so called because people are putting their own 'spin' on what happened.

After an agonizing wait, we were finally let into the room. We were the only credentialed minors in the whole process, so special requirements had to be made. I remember a quote from my partner Austin Barringer who said with a determined look on his face, "I will shake hands with a senator before I leave". We went in groups of two and had a chaperone with us the entire time. If there was one phrase I would use

One had to be bold in order to catch people to interview. Everyone in Spin Alley was on his or her way somewhere. I had to be quick and persistent. While standing right outside Spin Alley, I saw renowned NBC correspondent Chuck Todd talking to someone right outside the door. Seizing this rare opportunity, I walked right up to him and asked for an interview, flip camera at the ready. He agreed and as a result I got a great answer to 'who won the debate and why?'. The other students, faculty, and the C-SPAN hosts were shocked at what they

ize that being audacious pays off. Timidity never got anything done. And yes, access is power. That is why so much in this world is considered exclusive. But as tempting as power may be for most, I am content to live and learn, observe and record, for all of history to understand.

Death Toll in Syria

Continues to Rise

By Jackie Parker

As Americans scroll down live news feeds on their smartphones, most headlines are closely related to the outright bloody civil war in Syria. Over 40,000 people have been killed by the Syrian conflicts, and the death toll continues to rise. Many worry that the violence is becoming not only a matter of political conflict but one of major humanitarian crises that will leave lasting effects on Syria and its surrounding countries.

wrong hands of terrorists groups and other unstable countries in the Middle East. If these weapons are used, death toll will spike drastically, and the deleterious situation will most likely engage other countries in the UN to get involved.

Currently, the US forces encouraged NATO to supply Turkey with Patriot missiles to help destroy chemical weapons in flight. The US has also made clear that



Rebels gain strength over President Assad's regime by aiming to seize the Damascus airport, although the area is flooded with armed Syrian troops. The area has become a hot zone for missiles and explosive weapons, which has displaced thousands of civilians, many of which have been housed in Turkey. With the advancement of rebel forces, many worry that President Assad will resort to chemical weapons for combat. Such chemical weapons include mustard gas, sarin, and possibly nerve agent VX, which all severely impact the central nervous system by paralyzing lung muscles and may cause death.

The amount of chemical weapons Syria currently holds is unclear, but Syria concerns the UN and other nations who worry about these weapons falling in the

there will be clear "consequences" if President Assad uses excessive deadly force and allows chemical weapons to fall into the hands of terrorists and Iran. Syria is of major concern due to the level of influence it has over the oil industry in the Middle East, and it can directly impact major global powers if things go terribly wrong.

Major global leaders need to take a more aggressive stance with the Syrian government, as minor threats continue to not phase the level of violence. The future will be up to the rebels' perseverance to defeat President Assad's regime, along with meditative UN and global forces to put an end to this humanitarian and political crisis.

Statistics and reports above are based on information from December

Central Valley Chapter Con

By Brian O'Rourke

The Pacific Northwest has held two chapter conferences to prepare its delegates for the debating season. The first, held at the International School in Bellevue, Washington, kicked off the JSA year early and brought in delegates from all around the state. The second, held at Central Valley High School (CV) in Spokane Valley, Washington, was the first large scale Inter-Regional chapter conference in recent history. Yielding over fifty delegates from both the Greater Puget Region and the Inland Empire Region combined, the chapter conference helped prepare the students at CV, many of whom had never attended a convention before, for Fall State. For the fifteen students who made the trip from Western Washington to Spokane for the conference, the drive was well worth it.

The chapter conference, which was hosted by the IER's Mayor Mackynzie Watts and Vice-Mayor Tyler Pichette, offered numerous debates that explored the economic and social issues facing Washington and their effects on the upcoming election. From mari-

juana legalization to social mobility, debates encompassed a plethora of subjects, with a keynote debate on the choice between Jay Inslee and Rob McKenna for Governor of Washington.

To finish off the night, delegates participated in some fantastic social activities, planned by Tyler Pichette, who also serves as the PNW's Director of Social Activities. Pichette later commented on the chapter conference saying that "overall, the chapter con went fantastic and everything went together wonderfully as many of the debates were both thought-provoking and humorous, both keynote speakers presented a unique view on local politics, and the social activities at the end were a nice touch. This weekend just goes to show why the PNW under the leadership of Governor Baghai has such a bright future," and GPR attendee Killian Scanlan agreed, calling the experience "riveting and engaging." This chapter conference was a major success and truly showed the dedication of the Pacific Northwest.

Angeles Region One-Day

By Yegina Whang

The Angeles Region Fall One-Day convention held on Saturday, October 13 at Loyola Marymount University was a huge success. Over 180 students showed up for the event, making it the most heavily attended one-day in AR history. Throughout the day, attendees were able to watch and participate in debates, vote in a mock election, register to vote for the actual 2012 elections, and network with other JSAers from the region.

This year's theme was "Election 2012: Beyond the Ballot Box" in response to the contentious election season. The event opened with AR Mayor Sabrina Lieberman and AR Vice Mayor Alejandro Lomeli warmly welcoming all the delegates. Denise Nielsen, the Central Coast Region Chair representing the Mitt Romney presidential campaign and Assemblyman Isadore Hall III representing the Barack Obama presidential campaign came to talk about their experiences working in the political sphere and campaigning for their respective nominees.

Participants, through a variety of debates, thought talks, and workshops, were also able to address issues and topics that dealt directly with the elections and presidency. Some of the resolutions included, "Should voting be mandatory in the United States?" and, "Should the United States President be able to run for more than two terms?" Additionally, they were able to learn more ways to become involved in the government other than through the elections, become better public speakers, and broaden their political views.

There was a buzz in the air as AR Mayor Sabrina Lieberman announced the results of the mock elections, and they showed that President Barack Obama was a clear favorite among the attendees. The day ended with AR Director of Debate Jessie Killackey passing out "Best Speaker" awards to students from Crespi High School, Valencia High School, and Van Nuys High School.

Recently, the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association donated \$1,500 to the southern California sector of JSA, making it recognized by adults, teachers, and other major organizations alike.

The Issues Are What Matters

By Jessica Chitkuer

At Junior State of America (JSA), a nonpartisan civics organization that educates today's youth about the importance of combating political apathy, students are taught to look past the party and to the candidate. At a time when it seems that nothing is being done because of partisan gridlock, bipartisanship is important now more than ever.

Looking past party biases and one-sidedness allows students to really take a look at the issues at hand. This year's election presented two front-runners: Democrat incumbent Barack Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney. Though President Obama won a second term, most individuals were not familiar with the names Thomas Hoeffling, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein or Roseanne Barr. The aforementioned names were the candidates representing other respective parties within our nation, parties that the everyday American does not think about when at the ballot box.

The unfamiliarity of these names amongst our citizens goes to show what elections in the 21st century have come to: two-party politics. Two-party politics has evolved into "Democrat or Republican," "right or left," and "right and wrong," which simply is not the case.

Looking past the party, and even past the candidate, is the most important thing voters should take into consideration because the issues are what matters. Especially considering the current state of our nation – our stagger-

ing multi-trillion dollar debt, the rise of the healthcare debate, and the issue of funding for various programs – the propositions being voted upon at the polls will have an even greater effect now more than ever.

This year's presidential election brought up many important topics of discussion. During the three televised debates, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, along with their vice-presidential candidates Joe Biden and Paul Ryan, spoke of their stances on issues ranging from what course of action to take with regards to our nation's undocumented citizens to how to stop our nation's staggering deficit. The presidential debates can be looked at as a main feature of the election that have allowed voters to take a look at the issues at hand. Obama's and Romney's answers to the questions taken from our citizens were what was really critical because they put stress on the significance of contemporary American problems and our dire need to fix them.

Though election 2012 was the time for citizens to vote for the candidate that they thought would be best suited to become the leader of our nation, it was also the time to look at the issues that will affect each and every one of us. Looking past the party they represent is what all voters need to do when considering candidates.

Winter Congress

Washington D.C.

Feb. 8-10, 2013

Feb. 15-17, 2013

Feb. 22-24, 2013

Sacramento, CA

Feb. 2-3, 2013

Portland, OR

Feb. 9-10, 2013

Torrance, CA

Feb. 16-17, 2013

Visit jsa.org to learn more about about JSA events and opportunities.



Reforming the AP System

By Jenny McGinty

The new expression “a college education is the new high school diploma” has created a contemporary standard for all high school students to now strive and reach. A plethora of jobs have now turned a new leaf in requiring a higher level of education from their applicants and workforce. In order for high school students to accomplish this requisite of attending college, prepping in high school is one of the most single important actions a student can take. An option that is offered in public and private high schools as well as prep-schools is Advanced Placement courses. The A.P. system offers a numerous amount of benefits for students in their preparation for their college career, ultimately establishing that the program should not be reformed nor limited in availability.

A common complaint from proponents of reformation claim that once a limited program, A.P. classes have now just become a GPA and rank booster. In a survey of A.P. teachers released this year, according to the New York Times, more than half said that “too many students overestimate their abilities and are in over their heads.” Some 60 percent [of those teachers] said that “parents push their children into A.P. classes when they really don’t belong there.”

These claims are quite astonishing because it seems as though these proponents of limiting and reforming the A.P. program are ignoring the most obvious and

important benefits of students taking advanced classes. Whether or not a student will make a letter grade of A in a class or enjoy the course being taken, skills are picked up and the experience of taking a class with a more difficult rigor than average high school classes is gained.

The College Board has created a new gateway for high school students to not only gain this experience, but it also allows students the chance to gain dual-credit through the AP Exam. Limiting the amount of students that can take these courses and stripping away their option in challenging themselves puts progression and growth of students overall at a standstill. However, actors of reformation make yet another frivolous claim in saying that a score of 5 on the exam is not promised, and that a student is not guaranteed to make all A’s in their college career. The point in a limited opinion at least, is neither to make a perfect score on the exam nor to make flawless grades in college. Instead, A.P. courses are taken in preparation for postsecondary education and to gain experience in taking an exam very similar to those taken in college.

Furthermore, another claim from The Atlantic is that “... despite the rapidly growing enrollments in A.P. courses, large percentages of minority students are essentially left out of the A.P. game...so, in this as in so many other ways, they are at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to college admissions.”

Rather than pointing out the problem in a great program and immediately looking to abolish it altogether, initiative should be taken in such a way to revamp and improve the system. Allowing these classes to be available to those schools in low-income areas or where minorities are at a “disadvantage” would help solve issues such as these. Rather than pointing a finger at a simple cog in the machine and using it as an excuse to get rid of something is counterproductive. The art of dynamism should be adopted and used to fix these faults and expand the program even further to benefit students.

Finally, reforming the A.P. program and creating a connotation about how it’s only made for the “elite” will steer away kids to actually take a challenge. Cecile Springer, a Penn State Board of Trustees member, once said, “Above all, challenge yourself. You may well surprise yourself at what strengths you have, what you can accomplish.” Even if the College Board is bullied into reformation simply because there is not a one hundred percent success rate from these students, there will still exist a significant number of students who will suffer in college due to lack of preparation. Students should not be required to take AP classes, though they should be allowed the availability they deserve in taking the initiative for a challenge that will well benefit them in the end.

JSA Averts the Fiscal Cliff

By David Cahn

Modern politics is plagued by a deadly polarization. America has come to a point where we do or die. The longer we stagnate, the harder we fall. The United States was supposed to cross the fiscal cliff on January 1st, leading to sequestration and ultimately, recession and an unemployment rate of 9.1 percent in 2013, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Long-term economic problems are equally damning: CBO estimates that Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security will consume America's budget by 2036.

On one thing, the two parties agree: Crossing the fiscal cliff will be disastrous for our economy, not to mention the morale of our nation, the stability of our financial markets, and our perception in the international community. But rather than compromise in order to solve our nation's problems, Democrats and Republicans alike stick to dogmatism, spewing the party line, and blaming each other for the failure in negotiations.

As debate trumps compromise, solutions are obsolete. The root problem is the competitive culture that is the basis of modern politics – the idea that Republicans and Democrats see each other as “the enemy” rather than as partners with the ultimate goal of serving the citizens of the United States.

This is a view cultivated in students from a very young age. Look no farther than a high school. Popular political groups include the Debate Team, Young Democrats, Young Republicans, Student for Liberty and the Junior State of America. Every group is focused on winning: Whether it's about winning debate tournaments, best speaker awards, or even elections, no one focuses on working with the opposition, only alienating them.

This year, the Northeast State of the Junior State took a different approach. We decided that teaching students the value of compromise – how to work together with your opponents to solve tough political issues – is a much more valuable skill than winning a debate. In the real world, no one cares who is right. We care who legislates. Ask yourself the simple question: Would you prefer a Congressman who won every debate he engaged in, but failed to pass constructive legislation, or one who knew how to compromise?

In a new activity known as Solution Central, students were forced to converge on a solution to the fiscal cliff. Here are the rules for the political simulation: Two main speakers represent opposing political party leaders (John Boehner and President Obama for example), with firm positions about the issues facing America. Using three-minute speeches, moderated-caucuses, and un-moderated caucuses, the audience is responsible for developing a proposed solution to the topic. In order to pass, the proposal must be agreed upon by 50 percent of the audience and both main speakers.

The 100 students engaging in the activity were given ample time to research beforehand, and even to discuss their ideas with one another. On November 17, they met at the Northeast Fall State to engage in a productive dialogue.

The results speak for themselves: The audience and both main speakers overwhelmingly agreed on a plan to avert the fiscal cliff. Their rough plan included the following provisions:

- Stop the zero interest rate policy and stop monetizing private and public debt
- Allow the use of social benefit bonds to reform spending programs and military (tax deductible)
- Lower corporate tax rates from 35 to 20 percent
- End the Federal Housing Administration but keep Fannie and Freddie public

As Congress continues to stagnate, our generation is faced with the hard reality of a bleak future. But we have the opportunity to change the tone of the national discussion by moving away from debate for the sake of debate, and moving toward compromise. Will we always be right? Of course not. But if we start learning the value of working together to achieve constructive solutions while only in high school, this country will be a lot better off when it's our turn to set the political agenda.



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The DREAM Act

By Jin Park

"Why haven't they been deported?" This is usually the first thing people ask when they learn that there are approximately 11.5 undocumented immigrants in this country, human beings with stories as varied as America itself yet lacking a legal claim to exist here. Some ask it with anger or frustration, others with genuine bafflement.

The immigration debate divides our country, and it is clear why a consensus on solving the immigration dilemma is so elusive. There is, quite significantly, a large difference between illegal immigrants

and undocumented immigrants. An "illegal immigrant" is a foreigner who (1) does not owe allegiance to our country; and (2) who has violated our laws and customs in establishing residence in our country. He or she is therefore a criminal under applicable U.S. laws. An "undocumented immigrant" is quite the contrary. For undocumented immigrants, the United States is the only country they can call their own, because many were brought to the United States as children, far too young

to identify any country as "my country." Put simply, an undocumented immigrant is someone who resides in a country without proper documentation. Calling an undocumented immigrant an illegal immigrant is offensive and dehumanizing, and Governor Romney made this mistake at Hofstra University in New York City during one of the presidential debates, which put a burden on

license. To get a driver's license legally, one must be either a permanent resident or a U.S. Citizen. The bottom line is that the easiest way to become a U.S. Citizen is to be born here. It doesn't matter who your parents are; you're in. If you were born outside the U.S. and want to come here, the golden ticket is the so-called green card, a document signifying that the U.S. government has



granted you permanent-resident status, meaning you're able to live and, more importantly, work here. Once you have a green card, you're on your way to eventual citizenship - in as little as three years if you marry a U.S. Citizen - as long as you don't

break the law and you meet other requirements such as paying a fee and passing a civics test. Obtaining a green card means navigating one of the two principal ways of getting permanent legal status in the U.S.: family or specialized work. The U.S. has a quota of about 25,000 green cards per country each year. That means Moldova (population: 3.5 million) gets the same number of green cards as Mexico (population: 112 million). For those who have sneaked across a border or over-

him and contributed to his loss in the 2012 Presidential Election. For undocumented immigrants, the plight towards legal status is a journey marked by confusion, indignation, and fear of the possibility of deportation. Everyday life for an undocumented American (yes, they are Americans) means a constant search for loopholes and back doors. For instance, in the post-9/11 era, one can't fly without a government issued ID. The easiest option for most people is their driver's

break the law and you meet other requirements such as paying a fee and passing a civics test. Obtaining a green card means navigating one of the two principal ways of getting permanent legal status in the U.S.: family or specialized work. The U.S. has a quota of about 25,000 green cards per country each year. That means Moldova (population: 3.5 million) gets the same number of green cards as Mexico (population: 112 million). For those who have sneaked across a border or over-

stayed a temporary visa, it's even more complicated. Options are extremely limited. One route is to marry a U.S. citizen, but it's not as easy as the movies would have you think. The process can take years, and same-sex marriage is not recognized by the federal government - explicitly so, ever since Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act.

When Americans discuss immigration, one word that seems unavoidable is "Mexico." Though roughly 59% of the estimated 11.5 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are from Mexico, the rest are not. About 1 million come from Asia and the Pacific Islands, about 800,000 from South America and about 300,000 from Europe. Others come from Nigeria, Israel, pretty much everywhere. In the case of countries that don't share a border with the U.S., there are almost always people who entered the country legally - as vacationers or on temporary visas who overstayed the time permitted. What's cemented in people's consciousness is the television reel of Mexicans jumping a fence. Reality check: illegal border crossings are at their lowest level since the Nixon era, in part because of the continued economic slump and stepped-up reinforcement. Still, for many, immigration is synonymous with Mexicans and the border.

The real political flash point is the DREAM Act, a decade-old immigration bill that would provide a path to citizenship for young people living in this country. Many Americans complain that the American tax code is outdated and complicated, but compared to the American immigration code, the tax code is as clear as it gets



in politics. The DREAM (Developmental, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act would provide conditional permanent residency to certain undocumented residents of good moral character who graduate from U.S. high schools, arrived in the United States as minors, and lived in the country continuously for at least five years prior to the bill's enactment. As of November 2012, 12 states have their own versions of the DREAM Act. These states are Texas, California, Illinois, Utah, Nebraska, Kansas, New Mexico, New York, Washington, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Maryland. The DREAM Act is an unprecedented piece of legislation that is more than a path to legal status. It represents the outstretched hands of a government that has for so long failed to recognize a large group of people - its own people. For the first time, "DREAMers" are given hope and recognition from a world that seemed to condemn their very existence. The United We Dream movement, as its young members call it, does not have a single leader. News travels by Twitter and Facebook updates, and unites immigrants and noncitizens alike under one cause.

The immigration question has become a third-rail issue in Washington, D.C. - more controversial even than health care because it deals with issues of race and class, of entitlement and privilege - issues that America has struggled with since its founding. As much as we talk about the problem, we rarely focus on coming up with an actual solution - an equitable process to fix the system. Maybe Obama will evolve on immigrant rights, just as he's evolved on gay rights, and use his executive powers to stop the deportation of undocumented youths and allow them to stay, go to work and school, if only with a temporary reprieve. The Republican Party can go one of two ways. It will either make room for its moderate voices to craft a compromise; after all, John McCain, to name just one, was a supporter of the DREAM Act. Or the party will pursue a hard-line approach, further isolating not just Latinos, the largest minority group in the U.S., but also a growing multiethnic America that's adapting to the inevitable demographic and cultural shifts. In 21st century politics, diversity is destiny.

Follow the Leader:

By Brian O'Rourke A Documentary

The documentary *Follow the Leader* created by Jonathon Levitt follows three high school seniors throughout their final year in high school and into college. As the 2008 U.S. Presidential election approaches, the film follows three students, D.J., Nick, and Ben, as they develop and change their political perspectives and beliefs. The film offers a rare and perhaps never before seen perspective into how high school can affect one's political beliefs. All three students live in relatively wealthy or at least conservative communities on the East coast, and their family backgrounds have helped shaped their conservative views.

D.J. concentrates on the morals he believes America was founded around. He feels that America needs to return to its effective methods of prior

years and that it's "up to people like [him] and other young people to try to change [America]..." After high school, D.J. begins to experience the world in a way that enlightens him and makes him question his beliefs, but his core faith is maintained, affecting his choices throughout his years after high school. Nick, whose late high school and college years affected a drastic change in his political beliefs, admits that those viewpoints "turned out to be one of the things that changed the most over the last few years." And later he says that the biggest change he underwent was his "approach and understanding of what politics is."

Ben, an idealistic conservative, dives straight into politics, trying to fast-track his rise to political prominence, saying that since "someone has to correct

the wrongs of our government, why shouldn't it be me?" His idealism faces many hardships throughout college, but despite the hostile environment around him, his conservatism is maintained.

I feel that these three students provide an interesting perspective of how American politics has developed since the election of President Bush; all three students state that their beliefs were influenced greatly by the events of September 11, 2001. While the documentary doesn't discuss in depth many subjects of political controversy or debate, it gives a broad view of how many Americans form their beliefs as well as many modern influences on politics, particu-

larly the social stigma against conservatives in higher institutions of learning, and the influence of race and economics in particular elections.



Levitt's work is a great reflection on the current state of American politics. Levitt believes that many people involved in politics can learn from the youth and that "the difference between the youth and their older counterparts isn't as vast as it is often made out to be." Nick, one of the students followed, reflected on being in the film, saying that it "made me a much more introspective person." The film overall provides an amazing view of many aspects of politics, from the running of non-partisan political organizations to campaigning for state election. Although none of the followed students arrived exactly where they hoped to be as adults, their experiences with politics throughout the film gave them a broader perspective of society and the formation of viewpoints.

Ohio River Valley: The District System

By Winston Underwood

In 2005, the glorious Ohio River Valley gained statehood, and two regions within the newfound state were created: the Ohio Valley Region (OVR) and the Great Lakes Region (GLR). After some odd years, the Ohio Valley Region metamorphosed to the Miami-Shawnee Region (MSR), which is what most current JSA-ers commonly know the region as. However, for everyone that attended either the ORV 2012 Winter Congress or ORV 2012 Spring State, there was a clear, significant difference in the structure of the ORV districts. This new system is a first of its kind, eliminating expansion and chapter health on a state level and giving it completely to the districts.

The Constitution of the Ohio River Valley Junior State is amended to abolish regions, create districts and provide for the leadership thereof.
-Ohio River Valley State Constitution, Amendment I, Section I

Within the entire ORV, there are four current districts: the Great Lakes District (GLD), the Central Ohio District (COD), the Southwest District (SWD), and, last but certainly not least, the Southern-Interior District (SID). The constitutional amendment, with its name being the Arumagum-Lakomy amendment, which changed the regions into districts, was drafted by Saayee Arumagum, the noted ORV governor at the time, and Michael Lakomy, the IRS Director at the time, and now SWD mayor. It was approved at Winter Congress, and chapters were approved into their respective districts at Spring State. Along with the birth of the district, there comes its flexibility, seeing as Arumagum desired for chapters to be approved by the Council of Chapter Presidents (CCP) rather than approving each district's own borders. "This needs to be a chapter by chapter basis," he declared. "If one mayor is more apt to deal with a new chapter, let's say due to personal connections, that fosters the intimacy necessary for meaningful top-down communication." However, it should be noted that the current borders drawn are merely a rough estimate, in an attempt to give JSA-ers a visual of where the districts are.

Most JSA-ers say the JSA season has just dawned, but to all of our new mayors, JSA season never ended. Through hard work and long nights, the mayors have already shown progress under this new system. For example, the GLD will finalize its first three chapters by early November, while the COD has already added a chapter with several more to follow, and the SWD has added three, with another five to be added in the near future. Maggie Bender, Great Lakes District Mayor says in praise of the new system, "A domino-effect of sorts takes place: the governor and LTG have goals, they communicate those goals to the mayors, who consistently work alongside the two to accomplish those goals, which leaves room for personal work and goals on the officials' parts, reduces stress and miscommunication, and seriously heightens the likelihood of success. We're now working with people to actually be the people."

Have an opinion about the 2013 Year?
Express your view and contribute to *The Junior Statement!*
Contact the Editor at akayruz@jsa.org.

All But Forgotten, Third Parties Endeavor On

By Jack Jares

"Wasting your vote is voting for someone you don't believe in!" Libertarian Presidential nominee Gary Johnson declared at the first Free and Equal 2012 Presidential Debate on October 23rd. The sentiment was shared completely by his three opponents, as well as the audience, who exploded into cheers and thunderous applause.

The event, organized by the Free and Equal Elections Foundation and moderated by Larry King, featured dozens of anti-establishment tirades from Gary Johnson (Libertarian Party), Virgil Goode (Constitution Party), Rocky Anderson (Justice Party), and Jill Stein (Green Party). The candidates remained mostly positive, and no one in the room brought up the uncomfortable fact that it was unlikely for any of them to break 1% of the popular vote in the general election.

Months earlier, however, many political commentators declared 2012 the year of the third party, the election that would finally deal a visible blow to the political establishment. With the Tea Party revolution of 2010, the massive Occupy protests, and the public's extreme aversion to Congress, the 2012 election seemed to be the perfect storm headed towards the traditional political hierarchy. This possibility persisted for months, through all of 2011 and early 2012. Texas Congressman and

perennial candidate Ron Paul ran his strongest Presidential campaign yet, organizing a massive grassroots campaign of youth eager to tear down the two-party dichotomy. Americans Elect, a political organization founded to pick an independent candidate in the nation's "first online primary," raised a staggering \$35 million in the hopes of putting a centrist on all fifty states' ballots.

The two largest third parties, Libertarian and Green, nominated very competent and charismatic candidates. Gary Johnson (pictured right) was clearly the most accredited nominee the Libertarians had ever run – a very popular two-term governor of New Mexico, nationally renowned for being the most fiscally

conservative governor in the nation during his two terms, and overall a very pragmatic executive with a clean, vibrant personal life. It was widely believed that, after Ron Paul's inevitable defeat in the Republican Primary, Gary Johnson would take the lead in the anti-government crusade. The Green Party nominated the dynamic and eloquent progressive Jill Stein, famous for her extensive work in third party politics. She

immediately proposed a "Green New Deal," which provided for a massive stimulus with a focus on Green jobs to be paid for in full by a thirty percent reduction in military spending and tax increases on the wealthy. Her policy suggestions quickly won her the endorsements of many notable intellectuals from Noam Chomsky to Chris Hedges.

So, with viable third party candidates and an



electorate frustrated with the two major parties, how did the third party movement fail to ever gain traction? Simply put, there never was any cohesive "third party movement." Different factions of the greater anti-establishment frustration conveyed messages that were in greater contrast to each other's messages than those of President Obama and Governor Romney. With the libertarians claiming the solution was to cripple the government, progressives claiming it was to empower it, and centrists claiming it was to compromise, it soon became clear that no single anti-establishment consensus could be reached, save that the establishment was undesirable.

In addition, the "perfect storm" in the political sphere that had begun in 2010 had almost completely blown over by mid-2012. When both sides of the political spectrum realized how close the Obama-Romney contest would be, they began crying spoiler on the third parties, and even some of the most dedicated libertarians and progressives quietly shifted their support to the major candidates. Americans Elect failed to field a viable candidate who could reach the minimum required threshold of 10,000 "delegates," and hopes for a centrist candidate were abandoned.

Refusing to end his campaign until the Republican National

Convention, Ron Paul stood between his grassroots army and Johnson for months. And when



Jill Stein (Green Party)

the convention finally closed, Paul refused to formally endorse the Libertarian Party candidate, seriously dividing his army's loyalty to Johnson. The Johnson campaign decided to dash all hopes of actually winning, instead imploring his supporters to "cast a protest vote that counts." In September, the online prediction market Intrade opened a market for Johnson's popular vote in the election; it has dictated from its opening about a 35% chance for Johnson to exceed 1% of the popular vote. Stein, in the meantime, failed to set up an efficient grassroots organization and fundraise effectively. Her campaign currently has a goal of a mere \$500,000 set for Election Day.

However hopeless the election may actually seem to them, the candidates have managed to keep their heads held high. They have continued to fight for their guiding values and principles, and their

small but devoted bands of followers have stood by them. As the third-party debates, the campaigns themselves will likely continue to be neglected by our political culture. The candidates fight on now for their message, not their electoral success. For this reason, an overwhelming defeat in the past election will not destroy the third party endeavor, but embolden it. For in the words of

an old, often-ignored critic of the establishment, "Let it not be that we did nothing."



Virgil Goode (Constitution Party)



Textbook accounts of how a bill becomes a law can never convey the passions of lawmaking. Even viewing Congress in session fails to give you a sense of the heated debates that go on in committee hearings or the compromising done in back room meetings. Congress 2013 lets high school students experience the thrill of having their own legislation passed by Congress or the anguish of watching their bill defeated. While many students struggle to understand Congress as an institution and “how a bill becomes a law,” this experiential civic education program augments classroom lectures and reading about this vital branch of government.

Writing Legislation

Student’s participation in Congress 2012 begins before the convention starts as students work in teams to research and write legislation. Students select an issue that they passionately care about and determine how Congress can use its powers to propose a solution to a problem.

Committee Action and Mark-up

At the convention, students are assigned to committees where all the legislation is discussed and marked up. Amendments are made and language is clarified while the students learn the art of compromise to earn the committee votes needed to send their legislation to floor of the House or Senate.

Floor Debate

Public speaking skills are emphasized as the sponsors of the legislation that passed in committee take the podium in the full House and Senate sessions. The chambers are always packed as supporters and opponents of each bill get a chance to speak and persuade the members to support their position. Students will have the chance to speak out on the most pressing issues that face our nation today.

Throughout the weekend, students use their critical thinking, public speaking, persuasion and negotiation skills all while learning about how Congress works, talking about current events and making new friends.

Preparing for Congress

JSA has produced a guide entitled “Preparing for Congress,” which covers the procedures and rules for JSA Congress as well as providing suggestions for getting you and your delegation ready for an enriching weekend. You can download this booklet by going to www.jsa.org/jsacongress.

Other Activities

The opening and/or closing sessions at each location will feature prominent political leaders as keynote speakers. “Political Fairs” with interest groups from across the political spectrum are held at some sites. Students will also have the opportunity to relax and have some fun at dances in the evenings.

Washington D.C. Special Events

The Washington D.C. Congress begins on Friday afternoon with an optional Speaker Programs for a limited number of delegations. Teachers are encouraged to arrange meetings with members of Congress or trips to museums and other Washington D.C. attractions on their own. A guide to some of Washington D.C.’s historical, educational, and cultural attractions is available from www.jsa.org/jsacongress. A special moonlight tour of Washington monuments will be held Saturday evening. Join us on Friday to experience this unique educational program in the nation’s capitol.

A sample agenda for the Congress conventions is available on our website at www.jsa.org/jsacongress

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:
VISIT WWW.JSA.ORG/JSAACONGRESS

Has the Time Come for Filibuster Reform?

By Emily Jacobson

With an approval rating below 20 percent, it is obvious that Americans are not content with Congress. The 112th Congress has been highly unproductive. One reason for this could be a lack of action in the US Senate. Filibustering, the use of dilatory tactics in an attempt to delay or prevent action, has been a major problem in the US Senate for several years. The tactic is causing obstruction in Congress, and the problem will continue to exist if the United States remains as partisan as it is now. Filibuster reform needs to be implemented to ensure that the number of obstacles does not continue to escalate.

The common act of filibustering gained attention in the media recently when Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell essentially filibustered a bill he introduced himself. McConnell proposed a vote which would have given President Obama the unlimited authority to increase the United States' borrowing limit. He attempted to embarrass Democrats by calling for an immediate vote on the measure, but ended up shaming himself when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and the Democrats agreed. Sen. McConnell then refused, and began to filibuster his own bill by stating that it needed 60 votes to pass instead of the usual 50. Critics slammed McConnell, calling his move "idiotic."

Before the 1970's, the filibuster was an annoying rarity, but the number of filibusters in the Senate has skyrocketed since 2007. 139 motions for cloture were filed during the 110th Congress. In the 111th Congress, there were 137. Now just the threat of a filibuster is enough to end debate on a bill. The filibuster is so widely used in the Senate that it is changing the institution. In 2007, Sen. Harry Reid said, "Sixty votes are required for just about anything." While this has continued to be true, the Founding Fathers never intended for the Senate to function this way. Some advocates for the filibuster might argue that it is an old tradition. In fact, the tactic originated by accident when Senators became aware that they could hold the floor for an unlimited amount of time when no time limit was set for the

debate of a bill. In 1917 the Senate introduced cloture, which is the procedure used to break a filibuster by putting a time limit on the consideration of a matter. Sixty votes are needed for a cloture vote to pass, and this motion is proposed far too often. Bills were intended to pass with a simple majority, not three-fifths. Very little can be accomplished when a supermajority is required to pass any controversial legislation.

Sen. Reid has stated that he will work to limit the power of the Republican senators to obstruct legislation. There are several proposed ideas for how to reduce the number of filibusters in the Senate. One such idea is banning filibusters on motions to proceed, which are required to open debate on any bill. Another small step in reform could be to ban filibustering on votes to confirm nominees and appointments.

Additionally, the process itself could be altered by reducing the number of votes necessary for cloture. Sen. Tom Udall of New Mexico wants to change the rules of the Senate at the beginning of the next session to include the "constitutional option." Several Democrats, including Sen. Reid, have voiced their support of the constitutional option, or "nuclear option," which would amend the cloture rule to require a simple majority to override a filibuster.

The Republican party has been mostly responsible for this obstructionism, however, they are currently the minority party of the Senate. If the Republican Party gains control of the Senate, it is safe to assume that Democrats will attempt to use filibustering to prevent the consideration of proposed legislation they do not support. Regardless of which party has control over the Senate, legislators elected to represent their states should be doing as much as they can to efficiently debate policy, for that is what they have been elected to do. When Congress reconvenes in January, the Senate should seriously consider voting to change the rules to prevent the frequent use of the filibuster from becoming an established feature of the Congress for years to come.

The Importance of Following Dreams

By Cat Zhang

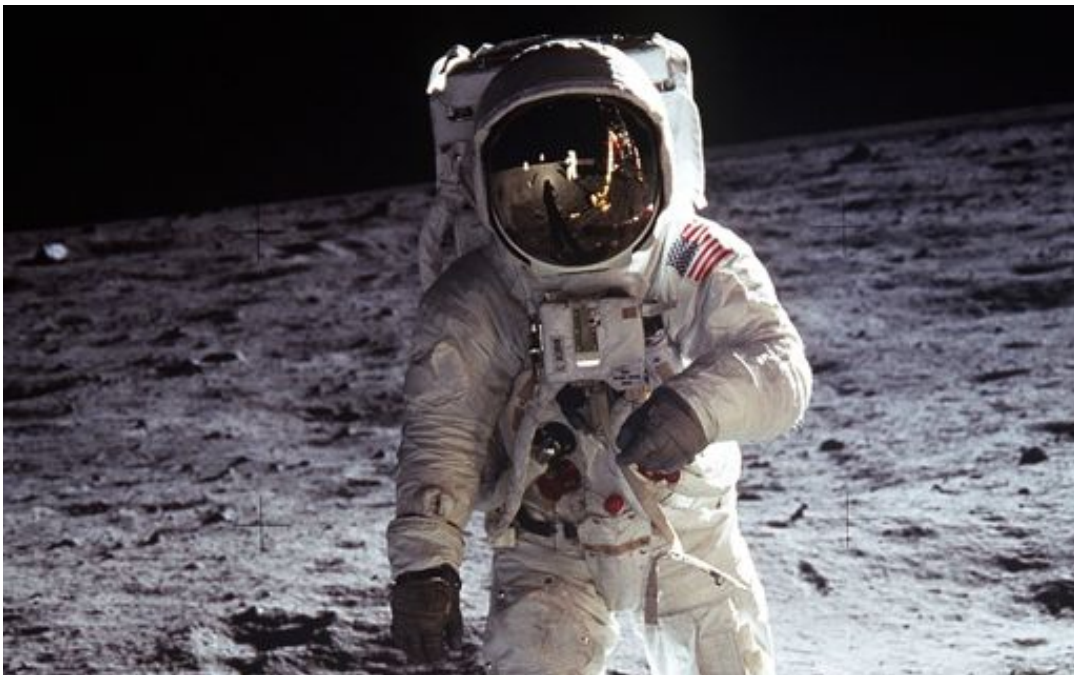
When we were young, we were told we could achieve anything we set our minds to. Our parents encouraged us to lather our paintbrushes with watery Tempura paint and drag them across thin construction paper, gasping at our "masterpiece" of messy brush strokes. Our teachers barraged us daily with examples of famous activists, politicians, or movie stars who overcame daunting obstacles. Our coaches would crouch down, flash their wide-toothed smiles at us, and proclaim out loud to our parents that one day, we would become stars. Our puerile minds quickly absorbed this endless encouragement, so we pranced around with an aura of confidence and fresh hope, obstinately believing our abilities were boundless.

However, this mirage dissolved quickly. As we grew older, feasibility, predictability, and rationality replaced passion, hope, and ambition. Being an award-winning journalist or a Michael Kors-level fashion designer wasn't reasonable; on the other hand, being a doctor or a lawyer was. And so these dreams of ours were discarded as naïve and unattainable, replaced instead with something more "realistic."

But sometimes we forget the importance of following our dreams. On an individual level,

the strive to accomplish a dream not only develops an individual's character, it also derives fulfillment, purpose, and meaning in their life. Dreams, and the desire to achieve them, are what cause advances in society. In total, dreams are the never-ending motivation, the everlasting incentive that drives action.

In a Joint Session of Congress on May 25, 1961, then-president John F. Kennedy announced the goal of landing a man on the



moon before the decade was over. He stated: "No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish." In the early 1970s, a tiny fledgling company called Canon sent out an audacious goal of beating Xerox, the undisputed leader of the copier industry at the time. In August of 1994, author Joanna "Jo" Rowling, commonly known under the pen name J.K. Rowling, had just filed for divorce. Her marriage had failed, she was

jobless with a dependent child, and she was surviving on welfare. Rowling described herself as "the biggest failure I knew." In 1995, the manuscript of her novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was submitted to twelve publishing houses, all of which rejected the manuscript. Put together, every one of the goals, at the time, seemed destined for failure.

Perhaps all of these objectives would have failed if the people working behind them were merely concerned with reasonability or practicality. However, this was not the case. After pouring 25 billion dollars into space exploration and making it a policy objective, Kennedy made his vision come true. On July 20th, 1969, American astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped onto the moon's surface,

within the time period that Kennedy had hoped. After standardizing copying machines, reducing costs and developing different capabilities than Xerox's, Canon surpassed Xerox by the late 70's. And after 5 years from living on social security, Rowling reached multi-millionaire status, with her *Harry Potter* series selling over 400 million copies. Rowling discussed the extent to which following her dream influenced her in 2008, when she claimed: "Failure meant a stripping away of the inessential. I stopped pretending to myself that I was anything other

than what I was, and began to direct all my energy to finishing the only work that mattered to me. Had I really succeeded at anything else, I might never have found the determination to succeed in the one area where I truly belonged. I was set free, because my greatest fear had been realized, and I was still alive, and I still had a daughter whom I adored, and I had an old typewriter, and a big idea. And so rock bottom became a solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life."

In his article published on the Harvard Business Review, Vijay Govindarajan explained: "Realistic goals promote incremental moves; only unrealistic goals provoke breakthrough thinking." Consider that if Steve Jobs hadn't followed his dream, we wouldn't have fonts, or iPhones, or maybe even personal computers. If Richard Branson or Elon Musk hadn't followed their dreams, we would've never seen private companies launch spacecraft to the moon. If entrepreneurs, or war photographers, or President Barack Obama, or anyone who had dreams never followed them, we would've never had anyone inspire us to follow ours. We would have never taken the steps that we did, or been the person that we are.

If I hadn't entrenched myself in Mock Trial in 8th grade, enamored with every minute past bedtime I spent writing questions, I would've never joined debate, a program which has shaped who I am in almost every possible way. There are so many things we may want to do with our lives, things that send our parents rushing to illustrate the horrors of being a fashion major or the arduous nature of creating our own non-profit organization. But despite the numerous hurdles that we will encounter, we must never forget the importance of following our dreams, the inexhaustible fuel that drives us to move forward.

Student Highlight



Connor Pfeiffer, Vice-Mayor of the Alamo Capital Region of Texas JSA, was recognized by the San Antonio Express News for his prominent contributions to the Republican Party of Texas. Gilbert Garcia, a San Antonio Express News Staff Writer, wrote the statements below about Connor.

Well, I don't think I'd be going out on a limb if I proclaimed that I've seen the Bexar County Republican Party's future and its name is Connor Pfeiffer.

Pfeiffer is a tireless crusader for the GOP cause, a natural-born organizer who never met a position paper he couldn't absorb. He's also a junior at Alamo Heights High School who won't be old enough to vote until 2014.

To get a sense of his dedication, consider that on May 29, the day that Bexar County primary voters went to the polls, Pfeiffer found time between his final exams to stand outside his school in a Wentworth T-shirt and work the polls for the veteran state senator.

If that doesn't persuade you, how about the fact that he spent part of his summer vacation working 100-hour-a-week shifts as the social-media director for Wentworth's doomed runoff campaign? This is someone who created — out of pure individual will — the High School Republicans of Texas (an official auxiliary of the state party organization), by painstakingly building individual chapters around the state.

Some kids are music or sports prodigies. Pfeiffer is a political wunderkind.

"Politics is a 24/7 thing for me," he says. "I get home, I read emails, I get updates from The Hill and check foxnews.com. It's a big part of what I do."

JSA Fall State Develops Political Awareness, Opportunities to Lead

By Sikander Zakriya

Imagine the Texas State Capitol in Austin, but instead of the usual state legislators, about four hundred high school students are converging on the house floor to be addressed by the Governor of The Texas Junior State of America. Debaters prepare and rehearse their arguments in between other debates and all through lunch. The buzz of students running from room to room, attempting to secure their seats for the upcoming debates, fills the chamber.

JSA is the largest student run high school organization in the nation. Students who are interested in politics and government, foreign affairs, law, and education, learn how to be participatory citizens in their democracy through summer schools, info sessions, and conventions.

From freshmen to seniors, Texas JSA Fall State affects each student differently, whether it be heightening political awareness or motivating and involving the next generation of students in the



political process thereby helping to create a more perfect union. Some take away newly found political ideals from conversations with others and the array of debates and “thought talks.” Others enhance their knowledge of the state of our union and politics as a whole in Quizbowl. Some are sculpted into future leaders through attendance at State Cabinet meetings and fulfilling their duties throughout the convention.

For sophomore Bijaan J., winning best speaker for his debate about the legality of voter identification laws was exhilarating. “It was really fun, especially since all of my friends were watching and I [had] prepared for a long time,” he said.

Not only was earning a best

speaker award impressive, but the fact that Bijaan managed to do it at his first JSA convention made it even more amazing.

Bijaan’s favorite part about Fall State was the various “thought talks,” heated discussions about various topics led by a single moderator, “because everyone could just get up and say what was on their mind about the topic, even if they had no prior knowledge [about the topic],” he stated.

Allowing people to talk and to express their views on a topic without a formal, prepared speech allows more participation and furthers the organization’s goal of increasing the number of people who become involved in the political world.

Anthony K. ‘13, who serves as
The Junior Statement Winter Edition



the National Editor-In-Chief of The Junior Statement, an online publication comprised of works from various members of JSA from across the nation, agrees stating that, "JSA fosters an environment that encourages people to stand up and participate."

This was Anthony's third Fall State and ninth JSA convention of his high school career. Anthony attended seven debates and managed to speak in all of them, sometimes as the main speaker and other times as a "subsequent speaker," or speaking off the floor. He also managed to win two best speaker awards, the most earned by an individual SMH student at the convention.

While the awards are nice, Fall State as a whole provides a unique experience. "It is entirely student-run. People often underestimate the abilities of teenagers, but the smooth organization of JSA proves that high schoolers can manage conventions efficiently," stated Anthony.

"At Fall State, participants can engage in political discourse, attend social events such as the dance, and make new friends who are interested in statesmanship," said Anthony. JSA Fall State offers something that satisfies every participant's needs.

An exquisite blend of knowledgeable, intelligent discussions with the formal addresses of the officers and a fun-loving party

atmosphere, Fall State also spreads the fever that engulfs students with a love for JSA, commonly known among participants as the "JSA Bug."

Texas JSA Governor and Saint Mary's Hall senior, Griffin R. '13 is in charge of running the Texas Junior State, comprised of schools from Texas, Colorado, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. In addition, he is a member of the Council of Governors (CoG), which is a group comprised of the ten governors who



attend is hard to believe," said Griffin.

The JSA Bug bit him after his first Fall State back in 2009. "I didn't realize how heavily I wanted to become involved until attending JSA Summer School at Georgetown University in the summer of 2011," said Griffin.

During his final Fall State, Grif-



fin's favorite moment was when he delivered the opening address on the House floor. "After watching my predecessors give moving speeches to kick off the conventions, it was an amazing experience and unique opportunity to follow in their footsteps," he added.

run their respective Junior States. As treasurer of the group, he helps oversee JSA's multi-million dollar budget.

Griffin's last Fall State was a bittersweet experience. "Presiding over the convention and seeing it be a success was unbelievably gratifying; yet, to know that I will never have another Fall State to

Fall State was a fantastic experience, with everyone taking something out of the convention and yearning to attend more JSA conventions in the future.

Junior State Remains Active

By Allison Berger

Although most JSAs were unable to participate in the Presidential Election by casting a vote, they still found a variety of ways to be actively involved and let their voices be heard. All across the country, students educated their school communities, sparked interesting conversations amongst their peers, and participated in our democracy in new and exciting ways. In particular, the Mid-Atlantic State truly took this fall's National Activism Initiatives to heart. A number of chapters held voter registration drives, debate watch parties, and mock elections. They were truly "being the people."

Many members of the New Jersey Region helped register voters during the NJR Fall One Day conference. In addition, individual chapters including the South Jersey Homeschool Chapter held similar events. Each year the SJHC hosts a benefit concert. This year, they set up a voter registration booth at the concert in hopes that attendees eligible to vote would register. Ruth Boyajian, Vice President of the SJHC, says, "I was very excited when we found four voter registration slips completed! Even though four more voters would not have had a great impact on the outcome of the election, these new voters had the opportunity to voice their political opinion through the privilege of voting." Ruth's words highlight how wonderful it is to give people the chance to participate in American democracy. However, JSA is not just about providing individuals with the opportunity to vote, it also about educating people so they may make informed decisions.

A number of chapters, including Bergen County Academies and South Brunswick High School, held debate watch parties with the twin goals of encouraging more students to watch the debates and stimulating meaningful discussion about each can-

didate's stances. At each of these events, students watched the debates together and then debated and discussed the issues that came up. Bergen County Academies really took initiative by making their debate watch party a potluck dinner that inspired a festive and fun mood. Chapters that were unable to watch the debates together often held online debate watch parties.

Once school communities were informed about the issues at hand, several chapters organized mock elections for their entire schools. Kent Place School, for example, held a mock election for both the middle and high schools. Students were extremely excited to cast their votes, especially as the chapter

secured the use of a real voting booth for the day! With well-over 90% of the student body voting, it was quite a successful event.

Finally, in addition to completing the specific Activism Initiatives outlined by National Director of Activism Michael Mintz (and MAS member), several chapters organized oth-

er unique election activities. For example, the Easton Chapter held a mock Presidential debate that was attended by an impressive 500 people. JSA member Sarah Wood acted as Mitt Romney, while Patrick Firth portrayed Barack Obama. Another Easton member, James Dappert, moderated the event.

If your chapter also took part in activism activities this fall, kudos! Keep up the excellent work throughout the year and continue being active and involved citizens. If your chapter was unable to participate, the good news is there is still the rest of the year to host an activism event. I encourage all JSAs to take initiative and actively strive to meet JSA's motto of "be the people."



DEBATE OF THE MONTH

Resolved, that armed guards be placed in every school in America.

On December 14th, 2012, one of the most tragic and fatal school shootings in history occurred in Newtown, Connecticut at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. In this shooting, twenty-six people were killed including twenty children. This tragedy impacted the whole country, and soon, a response was called for increased gun control. Simultaneously, many began to call for armed guards in school to increase safety. This proposal by the National Rifle Association has become highly disputed as it is an action advocating more guns at a time when many are demanding gun control legislation. Those in favor view it as a necessary action in response to the shooting. They feel that their children and the youth are unprotected while attending school. Those opposed see it as an unnecessary measure, blaming the school massacre on the ability for the shooter to get guns and learn how to shoot. They believe the best way to create a safer school environment is to increase gun control. What do you think? Should armed guards be placed in every school in America or is this an unnecessary measure?

PRO - Resolved, that armed guards be placed in every school in America.

This side of the debate argues that armed guards should be placed in every school. Following the NRA's proposal, many have sided with this measure because they believe that it is the only way to secure a safe environment for children at school. It is believed that gun control laws will be easily evaded and thus ineffective. Those on this side also argue that in the words of NRA President Wayne LaPierre, "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." In response to the arguments about the cost, the United States is currently spending two million dollars to train police officers in Iraq, and those who advocate guards in schools think that this money should be spent to train police in America to put them in schools. Advocates of this proposal also cite the fact that President Obama's daughters' school has eleven armed guards who were there before the daughters decided to attend. If the elite children are well protected, then why can't every child in America have those same rights?

PRO side arguments:

- Armed guards would ensure a safer learning environment for students.
- Armed guards are the only thing that will stop school shooting massacres.
- This action would not be as costly as most believe.

CON - Resolved, that armed guards be placed in every school in America.

This side of the debate argues that armed guards should not be placed in every school. They believe that the gun proliferation is the cause of the school massacres and that having armed gunmen in every school is counter-intuitive. They argue that placing armed guards in schools would create an environment of fear and anxiety for children, which would create a bad environment for learning. What is needed is gun control laws including the banning of assault weapons and more extensive background checks. If armed guards are placed in schools, it will not prevent shootings from in other public places. Additionally, there is a high cost to place and train armed guards in every school in America that the country cannot afford in the midst of a recession.

CON side arguments:

- Gun control is needed in place of armed guards.
- Armed guards in school will create a tense learning environment.
- Armed guards in every school will be costly.

Demography and Party Dynamics

By Jack Noland

As anyone who has been outside in the past three months will know, the election has consumed the news cycle and American attention incessantly. The high-stakes make this process inexorable, as everyone has a vested interest, or should, in who wins. With President Obama's reelection in mind, I will be throwing my hat in the ring of punditry already looking to 2016 and beyond. As the twenty-first century advances, we have found ourselves on an intriguing track. The political landscape could be in for major change, but the nature of this development is at once previously unforeseeable and immediately at hand. To put it simply, the face of America is changing.

In 2011, for the first time in history, more minority babies were born than their white counterparts. To be sure, more white children were born than any other single group, but non-whites finally collectively outnumbered what amounts to the status quo in America. The real significance of this statistic that current predictions project whites losing their majority status by 2045. This is abundantly important for liberals, as minorities overwhelmingly vote for Democrats. The writing on the wall has

been scrawled for years, though. Even Republicans have become acutely aware of these facts. "We're not generating enough angry white guys to stay in business for the long term," worried Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham. It's resoundingly true. 74% of Latinos, and 90% of African Americans support President Obama, according to a poll conducted in early August. As these demographics swell, Republican support will likely contract. Disaster could be looming on the horizon for the GOP.

The Republican Party is, to put it plainly, an odd coalition.



After being the minority under decades of center-left rule, the new Republicans formed in the shadow of Barry Goldwater's disastrous campaign in 1964. Amalgamating evangelicals, segregationists, fiscal conservatives, and war hawks provided the party with a wide base, but this was by no means a happy marriage.

The competing interests (limited government versus reproductive control, for example) made the party loathe to schism. The Tea Party and Libertarianism have both moved to energize different subgroups. Every such offshoot weakens the coalition, and the Republican Party has suffered.

This is not to be taken as a prognosis of failing conservatism. In fact, the very reasons these alternate branches are so popular is an inherent belief for some in conservative ideals, but a prerogative to redefine a Republican Party that they feel has slipped to the center. There is an argument to be made that the primary process exacerbates this problem. The "race back to the middle" mentality fundamentally hurts the party, seen acutely in Romney's campaign. With Obama reelected, the GOP must go through yet another primary process in 2016. Perhaps an inspirational, fable moderate will

unify the party, but if history provides any insight, and it often does, I suspect conservatism will reign supreme in the primaries. Even the "maverick" of the party, John McCain, had to kowtow to far-right interests to win the nomination. I agree with Senator Graham. This scale, vacillating between conservatism and moder-



ation, struggles to find a fulcrum, a leader that balances both. The white, male population is dwindling, and it is not a basis for a sustainable political model. Every election statistic supports the idea that independent numbers are rising, and rising fast, and the current right-wing rhetoric is not winning over many. If it stays on its current track, the Republican Party may find itself a minority, just like its demographic of choice.

With these historical trends at their backs, and the positive future trends on the horizon, the Democratic Party stands to gain tremendously. The most important group to target is undoubtedly Latinos. This is precisely why Arizona, Georgia, and perhaps even Texas could be competitive by 2020. Rising numbers of Hispanic Americans voting for Democrats could make these states battlegrounds. Reclaiming Southern states could ensure electoral success nationwide. With inspirational, dynamic young Latino politicians like the Castro brothers, Julián and Joaquín, a blue Texas is not out of reach. Likewise, as

Junior State of America

minority numbers rise in states like Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida, Democrats could pick up power. The path to bringing in the Hispanic vote bears a great deal of resemblance to the similar journey that swung the African American bloc. It comes down to equality and respect. The pertinent civil rights issue now for Latinos is immigration reform. President Obama must make it a goal to pass comprehensive legislation. This could prove to draw Hispanics to Democrats, and could even benefit Republicans, especially in Southern swing states, who support these movements. Supporting such a rising demographic does nothing but help politicians everywhere. Leading the charge on immigration, and every other issue, is a new crop of Democrats.

In 2008, Barack Obama was able to win the White House because he represented the new America. Eloquent, passionate, and driven, he became the first man of color to become President because he inspired people to hope for change, and provided a clear, cogent message that was,

paradoxically, both idealistic and pragmatic, providing health-care reform, but an unachievable dream before. Republicans have passionate leaders waiting in the wings, to be sure, like Chris Christie and Marco Rubio. At this point, however, I believe that more Americans think that Democrats represent what they stand for. The party of the people still has the voice of the people.

Democrats have been the ones to modernize for the 21st century, and genuinely must try to look to the new to change, reform, and grow. Americans everywhere chose to follow Barack Obama down that path Tuesday night. As the youth of America, it is clear which party supports our issues. Progressive on social policy, working to lower college tuition burdens, and passing education reform, the Democratic Party is the group for youth. Already the coalition for Latinos, African Americans, blue-collar workers, and women, it may be the party of America for the foreseeable future.



From Rags to Riches:

The Story of Dublin Scioto High School

By Winston Underwood

One of the oldest chapters in its area of the ORV, the Dublin Scioto chapter has a unique past as well as a strong future. The chapter was founded in 2007 by Liz Litteral after she left Model UN. She eventually became the ORV Governor, and Erica Van Heyde took the reigns of the chapter her sophomore year. With little experience, Erica had to work hard to make the chapter run and become functional. By the end of her senior year, Scioto broke chapter records for chapter attendance and has the more people in the state government than any other ORV chapter.

In 2010, the Scioto chapter was weak. Four or five people attending each meeting. Two meetings a month. Three or four people attending state conventions. Unrecognized club to the school administration. A CP with minimal leadership experience. The thing that this CP did have is drive. Erica was determined to not let Scioto die. Mr. Kovach, a history interventionist teacher at Scioto was found to fill the spot of the T/A right around the time Tim Kocher became interested in JSA and became an active member along with a few other officer-bound students.

It was a slow start. Little was done to promote JSA beside word of mouth. The current chapter president, Winston Underwood, found JSA because he was following around a friend after school, and those events happened to lead him to JSA. Slowly, JSA gained a new member or two every once-and-a-while. By the spring of 2011, Underwood was appointed to vice president, Kocher moved up to senior vice president, and Van Heyde stayed at chapter president. With a good T/A, a chapter president with a year of experience, and two dedicated vice presidents, JSA at Scioto saw a future of promise and accomplishment.

Fall State came in late November as it always does in the ORV, but there was a different feel about the convention in Scioto. A T/A is coming. More than four people are coming. A freshman is coming. A notable new addition to the Scioto JSA family was Dylan Bickers, the current IRS Director for the ORV. WinterCon drew more from Scioto. It was also an important event because it was when Underwood declared his campaign for mayor of The Central Ohio District.

With a group of dedicated members from Scioto, growth came slightly easier. The school finally recognized JSA as a club and JSA made it into the yearbook. At Spring State, Kocher also won Lieutenant Governor, declaring his candidacy the first morning of Spring State. Underwood also won his three way race for mayor. Fourteen people from Scioto attended Spring State: the largest Scioto delegation ever.

Over the summer, officer meetings were held. Several Scioto members were appointed to cabinet positions by Gov. Dicken: two agents, one director, and one Muckraker Editor, which is the ORV newspaper. Underwood was asked to go to the leadership summit at Montezuma, the birthplace of JSA, over the summer, and when he returned, plans were put in place to host the first chapter conference Scioto has had since Liz was a member. On September 29th, that event was held at The Ohio State University, drawing members from ten different chapters around the state. At the state-wide Election One-Day, Scioto brought eleven members, the largest in the ORV.

Currently, Scioto is still working tirelessly to carry out the work that needs to be done to maintain a quality level chapter. So far, the three election-based activism initiatives have been completed. A mock congress is being organized by the Director of Debate for Scioto, Aaron Tharsius, and the vice president, Jahnvi Murali. This is set up just like WinterCon, but with less people and no party chairmen. The biggest accomplishment of all is the number of people going to Fall State 2012: twenty people. This is a record for Scioto. It is the largest delegation in the ORV going to Fall State.

In the course of two years, Scioto has gone from meetings of three people in the hallway, to meetings of thirty people. From four going to Fall State to twenty going to Fall State. From two motivated members in the chapter to two elected officials and four cabinet members of the state. From death and despair to excellence and honor. This is the story of the Dublin Scioto chapter.

JSA Moves to China

By Heidi Yuan



The Junior State of America Chapter at the Shanghai American School Pudong Campus has now been officially established, and I can say that with great pleasure and a cheerful smile radiating across my face. My name is Heidi Yuan, and I am very proud to introduce yet another JSA chapter to the collection of those already existing throughout the United States – but this time, my chapter is a demonstration of JSA's growing international presence among motivated students and young leaders. My involvement in JSA began this summer of 2012, when I attended JSA Summer School at Stanford University. Little did I know that what first drew me in to the program – which was, at first, the beautiful university campus – would have little significance upon my leaving. Rather, it turned out that the powerful determination, lively civic engagement, and extensive knowledge of such a passionate group of individuals was what stayed with me long after the three weeks of camp I so dearly regard as “the best time of my life.” The people, the passion, and the politics were all features of summer camp that drove my desire to spread and share the incredible experience with students at my own school.

Starting a club at Shanghai American School (hereon after referred to as SAS) is not meant to be an onerous task, but seeing as I was entering full-on into the IB diploma programme, a busy schedule did get slightly in the way of things. Luckily, I was able to find a wonderful, knowledgeable teacher advisor as well as another attendant of JSA Summer School to jumpstart the process of starting a JSA Chapter. With the help of these two people, my sister, my school administrator, a few friends from summer school, and the abundant resources from jsa.org, I

was able to have my school give my chapter its official stamp of approval.

At our greatly-anticipated Founder's meeting, a large group of interested students from grades 9 through 11 showed up to learn some more about the foundations of JSA and the operations of the club. After drafting a rough constitution, I convinced the interested members to take a look and see where they could make some amendments before submission. We introduced the club with a video concerning civic engagement, and it just so happened that our meeting took place just in time for the results of the 2012 presidential elections to be announced. The day itself triggered some preliminary discussions and a display of political standpoints, a perfect way to launch the club and potential interests.

Despite the promising signs, any chapter is bound to face some form of adversity. This was exhibited in the subsequent meetings, where it seemed rather difficult to sustain membership for the club, as well as encourage students to speak up about potential debate topics. A main difficulty was getting students to overcome their hesitation in order to voice their opinions. This, of course, begins with knowledge and research, which will be a primary improvement for our chapter next semester.

Nevertheless, I cannot be more excited about the existence of JSA at our school. Although fresh



and just sprouting from its roots, our chapter is surely on its way to reach full bloom in the near future. Before long, we will hopefully be interacting, debating, and moderating at conventions in the US – so watch out for an international chapter coming down the road to success!

Democracy in Egypt



By Jenny McGinty

Ever since President Hosni Mubarak was taken down from his pedestal of imperial reign and corrupt ruling, Egypt has been in a constant battle to become a government that promises fair political representation for its civilians. Conversely, the United States' mission entails spreading this treasure of democracy that we are so blessed to enjoy to countries which are pleading and protesting for a voice in their own government. This calls for the U.S. to take steps to ensure that these countries have a chance to succeed in their interminable struggle to reform their current government. Although there are factors that make Egypt an especially delicate and ailing area, such as their influence over Hamas, their reputed reputation with

the Muslim Brotherhood, and of course foreign relations with the United States, the United States must take an initiative in aiding its Middle Eastern ally.

The interest from the Egyptian republic to become a constitutional government has become a sort of beacon of hope not only for Egypt themselves but also for America. A prime initiative that we have taken ever since the Cold War is to spread democratic principles to the countries in which we involve ourselves. However, this beacon has been overshadowed by even worse political leadership that has recently taken over Egypt. When the announcement of newly elected President Mohammed

Morsi proclaiming his "absolute power" came out on the morning of Sunday, November 25th, the idea of sustainable democracy in Egypt fell back into the bottom of a vexatious pit. Now what does this mean for Egypt? This is yet another blow to Egypt's process of building a democratic foundation for their country.

This once again places the United States in a controversial position on whether to intervene further in Egypt's affairs, or whether to allow the President to take reign of the people of Egypt. ABC News reports that although President Morsi assured judges that his decree is "temporary" and limited only to "sovereignty-related issues," the people of Egypt are still severely upset with the decree he issued Thursday, November 22nd, which extended executive powers. The announcement sparked major demonstrations and a nine percent plunge in the country's stock market. Clashes between police and protesters have wounded 500 people and killed a 15-year-old Muslim Brotherhood member, who died in an attack on the main Brotherhood office in the town of Damanhour. Protesters criticized the decree for





exempting Morsi's decisions from judicial review and the opposition has accused him of behaving like a new dictator, equating him to former President Mubarak. It is apparent that Egypt is taking steps back rather than forward in progress in establishing their new democratic government.

However, if the United States' initiative entails spreading democracy, especially to support those people who are entreating and protesting for a voice in their government, the United States needs to take steps in helping to ensure that Egypt has a chance to fulfill their decade long goal in gaining this democracy. In light of International Law, many of these obligations are clearly delineated. Relevant documents are the annexed regulations to the Hague Convention IV of 1907, the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and Protocol I to the Geneva Convention of 1977. According to author Martin

L. Cook, Major obligations of the occupying power are the maintenance of law and order, administration of a judicial system, and provision of adequate food, water and medical treatment "to the fullest extent of the means available to [the occupying power]." Since America has had occupied forces in Egypt before, the U.S. has laid a seed of democracy to grow. In order for this seed of democracy to thrive, America needs to pursue aid to Egypt. The issue in the Middle East will only worsen if the U.S. continues to refuse to take action in these areas where political corruption keeps occurring.

The United States' ethical obligations as well as our strategic interests including continued access to Middle East oil and natural gas, stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and reducing anti-American terrorism are owed to this Middle Eastern country. Halting aid and giving up

an attempt to maintain democracy in Egypt will only make matters worse for the ill-reformed country as well as for America's foreign interests. In fact, According to The Hill newspaper, senior House Republican David Dreier of California says it would be a "big mistake" to cut funding to Libya and Egypt. Dreier says it is essential now more than ever to "strengthen ties with these fledgling democracies."

Democracy will benefit the people of Egypt just as it does to us, it allows us to participate and be heard by our policy makers and government officials to ensure the type of life we wish to pursue. However, a fledgling democracy is exactly what Egypt is at the moment. Egypt is in dire need of aid and support from the United States to ensure that a sustainable democracy is kept.



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