



# **SOUTH DAKOTA YOUTH CONGRESS**

The South Dakota Youth Congress is an annual roundtable conference for high school juniors and seniors. Some 30 student leaders participate in this intensive youth leadership experience where students deliberate on a public policy issue, decide what the opportunities, concerns and barriers are and then make recommendations to state decision makers. They learn to discuss and listen together; to open their minds to other opinions and to express themselves effectively. Students work together to develop leadership and communication skills along with practices for active participation in their school, community and state.

In 1998 the first South Dakota Youth Congress was held on the University of South Dakota campus. The issue topics are chosen by the participating youth each year. Previous South Dakota Youth Congress issues include:

- 1998 Vision building and identification of issues pertaining to today's youth and their future
- 1999 Pre-college (K-12) education
- 2000 Teen issues and what role public policy should play to address youths' concerns
- 2001 Potential career opportunities and workforce development for South Dakota future leaders
- 2002 Teens & Technology: Public Policy Implications
- 2004 Involving Youth in Environmental Issues and Decision Making
- 2005 Rights, Freedoms, & Responsibilities in Today's Society
- 2006 The Global Community: Youth's Vision for Change
- 2007 The Role of K-12 Education in Preparing Today's Youth for the Future
- 2008 How does the U.S. Congress and South Dakota State Legislature Respond to Youth Issues
- 2009 The Energy Problem: Choices for an Uncertain Future
- 2010 Challenges and Effects of Poverty on Youth

Nominees for South Dakota Youth Congress should have demonstrated one or more of the following leadership qualities:

- 1) Active within his or her community, school, or organizations;
- 2) Concern for South Dakota's and America's role in the global community;
- 3) Excellent attitude about the role youth in the future of South Dakota and the United States; and
- 4) Reliability and commitment to making a difference for their school, community, and state.

The South Dakota Youth Congress is scheduled for July 26 - 29, 2011 on the University of South Dakota campus. This year's topic is *"Developing a Voice on Current Youth Issues"*.

Each Congress produces a report of its findings to be shared with all South Dakota elected officials and other leaders. To receive a copy of any of the South Dakota Youth Congress reports or to submit a student nomination, contact DeVee Dietz, Director, 605-341-4311 or email: [ddietz@chiesman.org](mailto:ddietz@chiesman.org)