

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AT CARPENTERS' HALL *High school students gather in Philadelphia to discuss the country's founding ideals and their hopes for the future*

Distributed nationally by American Public Television, *The Young People's Continental Congress* will be available to public television stations beginning September 1, 2026

PHILADELPHIA – **WHYY** presents *Young People's Continental Congress*, a program highlighting a special learning event that brought 27 teams of students and their teachers from 22 states, the District of Columbia and the territory of Guam to Philadelphia's historic **Carpenters' Hall** for a multi-day immersive program in partnership with National History Day (NHD). Concluding their experience, the group convened to discuss history, America's foundational documents and the students' hopes for the future.

During the summer of 2025, Carpenter's Hall, in partnership with NHD, hosted the Young People's Continental Congress (YPCC). From across the country, student-teacher teams were invited to study history and civics in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Participants explored our nation's founding and learned how the ideals of the era have continued to be debated, discussed, and refined during the past two and half centuries. Each team included one high school student and one teacher, for a total of 54 delegates (see full list at the end of the release).

"At WHYY, we believe education is about more than learning history, it's about understanding how history shapes the world we live in today," said **Bill Marrazzo**, WHYY President & CEO. "We're proud to partner with Carpenters' Hall to help students explore our nation's founding, reflect on its enduring ideals, and to understand America's story is still being written. Most importantly, they know the next chapter belongs to them."

Hosted by WHYY's Avi Wolman-Arrent, the program highlights the free-flowing discussions by the delegates as well as their very own *Declaration of Aspirations* agreed upon during the YPCC (also at the end of this release). Additionally, the show incorporates video packages created by WHYY Education students through the Pathways to Careers program highlighting various moments during the congress.

American Public Television (APT) will distribute *Young People's Continental Congress* to public television stations nationwide, bringing this timely exploration of America's founding document to audiences across the country during the nation's 250th anniversary. The program will also be available to stream at the PBS@America250 explore page as part of APT's **America is Local** collection, as well as on the PBS App and at PBS.org.

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Motion graphics used throughout the program were created by former WHYY Education student, Ren Hatcher.

Young People's Continental Congress will be available to public media stations nationwide through APT on September 1, 2026.

About WHYY:

WHYY, the Philadelphia region's leading independent, non-commercial public media provider, has served southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and all of Delaware for more than 70 years. WHYY's mission is to engage audiences, expand perspectives, and empower communities through lifelong learning, truthful reporting, healthy dialogue, and amplification of diverse voices. The station's national production and presentation roster for public media includes *Fresh Air* with Terry Gross & Tonya Mosley, the award-winning weekday magazine of contemporary arts and issues; the children's arts education series *Albie's Elevator* and *The Infinite Art Hunt*; the weekly science and health program & podcast, *The Pulse* as well as a variety of documentaries, series, and specials. WHYY also serves as the Local Primary 1 (LP1) station for the Philadelphia emergency alert system (EAS) operational area, acting as the region's primary broadcaster for receiving and relaying emergency alerts to other stations and cable systems—ensuring the public receives timely and potentially lifesaving information. For more information, visit WHYY.org

About APT:

American Public Television (APT) is the leading syndicator of high-quality, top-rated programming to the nation's public television stations. Founded in 1961, APT distributes 250 new program titles per year and nearly one-half of the top 100 highest-rated public television titles in the U.S. APT's diverse catalog includes prominent documentaries, performance, dramas, how-to programs, classic movies, children's series and news and current affairs programs. *America's Test Kitchen*, *The Best of the Joy of Painting* with Bob Ross, *The Chavis Chronicles*, *Christopher Kimball's Milk Street Television*, *Doc Martin*, *Hope Street*, *Lidia's Kitchen*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Miriam and Alan Lost in Scotland*, *Pati's Mexican Table*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Samantha Brown's Places to Love*, *Table for All* with Buki Elegbede, *Willie Nelson's 90th Birthday Celebration* and *NHK Newsline* are a sampling of APT's programs, considered some of the most popular on public television. APT also licenses programs internationally through its APT Worldwide service and distributes *Create®TV* — featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming — and *WORLD™*, public television's premier news, science and documentary channel. For more information visit APTonline.org.

Young People's Continental Congress – Declaration of Aspirations - July 18, 2025

In the spirit of the First Continental Congress, the 2025 student delegates created their own Declaration of Aspirations as part of the Young People's Continental Congress.

Whereas 56 delegates from twelve colonies began meeting at Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on September 5, 1774, as the first Continental Congress charged with finding a unified voice for the communities each represented;

And whereas, these delegates discussed hopes, fears, aspirations, and a growing sense of alarm at the political divisions sowing conflict across North America, before together articulating powerful statements of shared rights and liberties that continue, nearly 250 years later, to inspire generations of Americans to create a more perfect union;

And whereas, 27 delegate teams from US states and territories have again assembled at Carpenters' Hall to discuss the rich and complex history of our nation's founding era, as well as the enduring legacy of the ideals of the American Revolution for the history, present, and future of the United States;

We, the delegates of the 2025 Young People's Continental Congress, do hereby declare the following aspirations for our peers and our country,

Life and liberty

That the young people of the United States reaffirm our commitment to the promises of liberty and fundamental equality that have served as a guiding light for generations of our forebears;

That we commit to building a future grounded in fairness, respect, compassion, and universal human dignity so that all young people share the freedoms necessary to lead and thrive;

That we seek to create an environment in which there is no stigma attached to seeking enhanced mental and physical health, and in which necessary care is accessible to all;

The pursuit of happiness

That we and our government guarantee that economic opportunities are accessible to all communities across every region;

That we aim to recenter our shared American identity around the basis of natural rights and, in so doing, commit to work to remove disparities created by race, gender, religion, and income;

That we aspire to reform existing social and economic systems to provide the chance to secure fairly compensated employment and affordable and accessible healthcare;

That we seek to build a community in which the technology, knowledge, and information necessary for informed civic engagement are available to all;

That we seek to use these resources to preserve and protect our natural environment;

Education

That we expand access to high-quality and well-funded education—free of government censorship—at all levels so that every American can live up to their fullest potential;

That we lay the foundation for a world in which critical thinking, individual thought, respect for multiple perspectives, and civil discourse are the status quo;

That we treat all students as individuals; and that we respect the contributions of many cultures in building our nation;

That we invest in the civic education necessary for people of all ages to work together to improve the health of American democracy and uphold the revolutionary ideals written in our country's founding documents;

Government accountability

That our government acts according to the will of the people and adopts policies to improve the lives of all Americans with accessibility, transparency, and accountability to the American people;

Justice and rule of law

That our justice system preserves and protects the rule of law, including its fundamental principles of fairness, due process, and equal protection;

That the rights and liberties encoded in our laws extend to all people residing in the United States regardless of identity, status, and human condition;

Political Unity / E Pluribus Unum

That we embrace our responsibility to participate in our communities, our institutions, and in our government;

That we hold our government to its duty to provide opportunities for political participation in all communities, such that all eligible voters feel empowered to do so;

That we agree, at times, to disagree, listen respectfully to other perspectives, and learn to admit when we are wrong;

That we endeavor to build a system in which the broadest possible range of opinions and beliefs are empowered in our government.

Through these shared values and aspirations, we seek to begin to restore a spirit of unity and purpose to our democratic system, so that differences are debated with integrity and decisions are made in the interest of all Americans.

DELEGATES TO THE JULY 2025 YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONTINENTAL CONGRESS**Alabama**

Ms. Natalie Wright & Chrys Wright
Booker T. Washington Magnet High School
(Montgomery)

California

Mr. Aurelio Cortez & Nina Echevarria
Canyon Springs High School (Moreno Valley, CA)

Connecticut

Mrs. Regina Lee & Dominik Rose
Rockville High School (Rockville, CT)

Delaware

Ms. Barbara Stefani & Zhara Waters
St. Mark's High School (Wilmington, DE)

District of Columbia

Ms. Hayle Russell & Gael Grim-Garcia
Templeton Academy (Washington, D.C.)

Georgia

Ms. Arminda (Mindy) Lawrence, Sr. &
Jon Soren UyHam
Pace Academy (Atlanta, GA)

Guam

Mr. Brian Paul Galang & Kobe Miyashita
Father Duenas Memorial School (Chalan Pago-Ordot,
Guam)

Indiana

Mrs. Emily Lewellen & Genevieve Laguna
Brown County High School (Nashville, IN)

Iowa

Ms. Cheryl Smith & Paige Neighbors
Johnston High School (Johnston, IA)

Minnesota

Mr. Chris Griggs & Mirabel Sinykin
Edina High School (Edina, MN)

Missouri

Mx. Liam Dale & Henry Elliott
Lincoln College Preparatory Academy (Kansas City,
MO)

Montana

Mrs. Taylor Olsen & Ella Cooney
Harlowton High School (Harlowton, MT)

Nebraska

Mrs. Cass Didier & Lauren Culver
Waverly High School (Waverly, NE)

New Jersey

Ms. Christy Marrella & Aidan Smeglin
Cherry Hill High School East (Cherry Hill, NJ)

New York

Mrs. Mariah Duffy & Isabel Ginsberg
George W. Hewlett High School (Hewlett, NY)

North Carolina

Ms. Carrie Pratt & Sophia Nerenberg
Martin L. Nesbitt, Jr. Discovery Academy (Asheville, NC)

North Dakota

Mrs. Morgan Keena & Garrett Wells
Horace High School (Horace, ND)

Pennsylvania

Ms. Jennifer Ameigh & Sophia Hyatt
Sayre High School (Sayre, PA)

South Carolina

Mr. Marc Turner & Nitya Cherukumalli
Spring Hill High School (Chapin, SC)

South Dakota

Mr. Austin Olson & Elizabeth Meyer
Waverly-South Shore School (Waverly, SD)

Tennessee

Ms. Kelly Davis & Skyler Huskey
Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences
(Chattanooga, TN)

Texas

Ms. Julietta Rojas & Theodora Ordaz
Valle Verde Early College High School (El Paso, TX)

Texas

Ms. Karyn Cabana & Xavian Nguyen
Clear Falls High School (League City, TX)

Vermont

Mrs. Yelena Synkova & Ekaterina Synkova
Home School (Roxbury, VT)

Virginia

Mrs. Aroostine Sheston & Nam Nguyen
Brooke Point High School (Stafford, VA)

Washington

Mrs. Kathleen Hartman & Cooper Brix
Woodinville High School (Woodinville, WA)

Wisconsin

Ms. Kate Van Haren & Olivia Moore
Pittsville High School (Pittsville, WI)