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Arizona's Nominees Announced for the National Association of Secretaries of State John Lewis Youth Leadership Award

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

KATIE HOBBS
SECRETARY OF STATE

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

PHOENIX—The Arizona Secretary of State's Office is celebrating the 14 outstanding nominees for the state's inaugural John Lewis Youth Leadership Award.

First announced in May of this year, the award was created as an initiative by the National Association of Secretaries of State to honor the life and achievements of the late Congressman John Lewis and aims to inspire Americans by awarding a civic-minded young person in each state who exemplifies public service and advocacy for civil rights. Submissions for nominations closed on Aug. 15.

"Each of the nominees has demonstrated a dynamic and unique commitment to community service and civil rights issues, including but not limited to voting rights, to bring positive change to their community," said Secretary of State Katie Hobbs.

The 14 nominees are:

Ayesha Ahsan served as the Civic Engagement Chair for Arizona State University Changemaker Central and a Campus Ambassador for the Andrew Goodman Foundation, where she organized voter registration drives on campus, engaging thousands of students.

Denis Alvarez advocates for young people of color and the undocumented. While working at Phoenix College, Denis has been a reliable, bilingual source for young people pursuing a secondary education.

Triston Black served in several leadership roles, such as the Navajo Nation Youth Advisory Council, where he served as the member to advise Navajo Nation leaders about the importance of language, culture, history and government outreach.

Amanda Delphy is a second-grade teacher in the West Valley, where she has focused on empowerment through social-emotional practices, conversations about activism, and authentic history lessons that represent BIPOC individuals as powerful.

Alexis Delgado Garcia started his work in civil rights issues when he was a sophomore at Alhambra High School, serving with Living United for Change in Arizona, a community group that advocates for immigrant and working-class communities. As a member of LUCHA, Alexis helped lead the organization's biggest national campaign of volunteers for voter registration in 2018.

Jacob Martínez has helped register hundreds of new voters. He has volunteered for March for our Lives, My Community Development Corporation, and helps Low-and Moderate-Income neighborhoods in West Mesa stay engaged to build power to improve their neighborhoods.

Jonathan Martínez has served with the Pawn Initiative, which aims to bring the educational benefits of chess to underserved populations, including senior citizens, refugees/asylum seekers, African American, Latinx, and Native American youth.

Bitá Mosallai is a University of Arizona student and has worked with the Arizona PIRG Campus Action organization to carry out a voter registration drive, where she helped hundreds of people across the state register to vote.

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Kyle Nitschke is a student at Northern Arizona University and is the organizing director for the Arizona Students' Association. In 2020, he ran a statewide voter registration program in Coconino, Pima and Maricopa counties, and was able to register over 7,000 students.

Randy Perez is the democracy director at LUCHA. Randy has committed himself to a career of defending democracy, even facing threats of violence and arrest for using his speech in defense of voting rights. He has advocated for all Arizona voters, eligible voters, and those not yet eligible to vote.

Ivan Quintana completed two part time terms in the AmeriCorps Arizona Ready for College and Career program. He was the mission team leader for the Education and Policy Mission Team and director of advocacy for First Gen @ Watts. Additionally, he was part of the planning committee to host a book club for Mesa Community College students of the late Congressman Lewis' book "Across That Bridge: A vision for Change and the Future of America."

Blair Tarman is a member of the Chickasaw Nation, served in Arizona Tribal communities by protecting the right to vote through the Arizona Native Vote Election Protection Project during her time as a student at Arizona State University Indian Legal Clinic. Blair's work has spanned across the 22 Tribes in Arizona, voters living on Tribal lands in Arizona, as well as Arizona's urban population of Indigenous voters.

Greyson Taylor was instrumental in developing a nonprofit organization called African American Reconstruction LLC, of which he is the President. This organization spear headed the Candidates Forum for all the candidates running for elective office in our national, state and local elections. In this role, he worked with diverse groups to increase voter registration and provide outreach to all members of the Arizona community.

Shelby Young is the lead organizer for the Arizona Coalition for Change and Our Voice Our Vote Arizona and has created the programs Civic Scholars and the Young Black Organizers Project, helping to register more than 10,000 voters in 2020. She has activated youth and young voters throughout the state of Arizona, as well as mobilizing voters in Georgia, Oklahoma, and throughout the United States.

"We're excited to see so many qualified nominees for this award. This shows us that Arizona is in good hands when it comes to advocacy in the next generation," said Hobbs. "I am proud of the diverse accomplishments of each of the nominees, and commend them for overcoming challenges and obstacles, their innovative spirit, and their dedication to making their respective communities better."

The Arizona Secretary of State's Office will announce the awardee Tuesday, Sept. 28 in celebration of National Voter Registration Day.

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KATIE HOBBS
SECRETARY OF STATE

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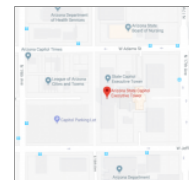
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