



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
MINNESOTA

Girls
STATE

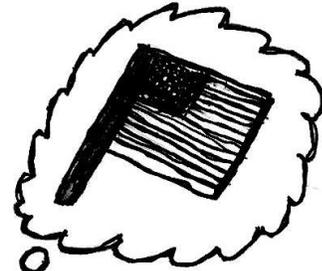
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Moccasin

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Rei Gurlick



For All ...

Safe travels
- Eagles

Congratulations!

Winner of the Ed Viehman Award: **Sonja Nelson**, City of Pheasant

Samsung Award: **Lydia Ruth Steinhaus**

Girls Nation:

- Senior Senator: **Sofia Fennell**, City of Owl
- Junior Senator: **Kindra Peterson**, City of Owl
- 1st Alternate: **Marissa Brunkhorst**, City of Poppy
- 2nd Alternate: **Margaret Fliszar**, City of Muskie



Governor Farewell Address

Hello fellow Girl Staters! Yesterday we had the incredible opportunity to go to the Minnesota capitol and practice the process of passing legislation. It was an extensive process that required a lot of time and careful consideration. I ended up receiving five bills by the end of the session.

First I'd like to address the two bills I vetoed, one of which being the Plastic Bag Tax proposed by the House of Representatives. Although I stand behind the purpose of this bill, I see room for improvement. One point I wish was included in the proposal was where the taxes received from plastic bags would be funneled into. I feel the bill's purpose, improving our environment, would be better served if we used the tax dollars to promote Minnesota organizations such as the MPCA or the MEP that are dedicated to the improvement of our state's ecosystem. I would love to see this bill amended and passed in the near future.

The other bill my constitutional officers and I decided to veto was the proposition of free menstrual products being offered in public secondary schools. The suggested funding was messy and wasteful at best. The bill had no mention of returning leftover funds to the government. *explain why it isn't logical with proportions for school sizes and money*.

I am so excited to report on the three excellent bills that have been signed into law. The first bill we received dealing with progressive income taxes will benefit all American families. The bill suggests splitting the lowest income bracket into two separate brackets and lowering the tax for joint accounts making an annual salary between \$0-20,000 from 5.35% to 3.2% and raising taxes for those in the top tax bracket .1% to cover the losses.

The second bill we passed mandated an hour of suicide prevention training and an hour of mental health training annually. Obviously this bill will help educators assist students who are dealing with mental health issues. Mental health is a growing issue in Minnesota and I'm so glad that we will be helping teachers with outreach.

The final bill that was passed requires companies to give veterans paid leave on Veterans Day. It is very important to give back to those who served our country so dutifully, and it is the least we can do to ensure veterans can celebrate and be honored on Veterans Day.

Now that I've covered all the important things we did yesterday, I'd like to talk about the profound impact girls state has had on me. I can't believe this week is already coming to an end. Honestly I admit, I didn't think I'd meet a lot of cool, fun, normal girls here. I don't know why, but I was under the impression that most of the people coming here would be really weird and not really interested in much other than school

and politics. On that first day, I was kind of to myself, sticking to Paige, a friend from my school who I've talked about a few times now, and a little tentative about meeting all of you. We walked around, talked to some of the girls down in the great hall area, and they actually seemed pretty cool. I went back to my room nervously anticipating meeting my roommate. I had no idea what to expect, but when we talked that first day, I instantly began to realize how much we had in common. After meeting Emily and some of the other girls from my dorm, I was getting really excited to get to know everyone. Much to my surprise, everyone was chill, had a lot of similar interests to my own, and could really carry on fun conversations. Through the lunches and meetings I got to know so many of you guys, and I can honestly say that I consider you my friends. It's unbelievable how compatible, kind, and supportive a group of 350 teenage girls turned out to be. Everyone here is very accomplished, however I don't think I've met a single girl here who was pompous and egotistical. Us girls lift each other up. I think that's really cool. At this point I would have thought I'd want to go home, but I don't. That's not because of the assemblies, or the speeches, or any of the politics, it's because I don't want to leave my friends. I don't know why or how, but I've grown so close to some of you girls and it pains me to think that I might not see you again for a long long time. Getting to see you all every day was something I took for granted. It's going to be so strange not getting to be able to meet up with everyone when you have something to say or a hug to give. I'm going to miss seeing your faces everyday. It's something I've grown accustomed to, and now that we're all going our separate ways, we won't have that again. I want you all to take the things you've learned this week back to your communities; teach your peers about the importance of voting, discuss current issues you see around you, bring back change to your home towns. We've all grown in our understanding of city, county, and state government and it's now our duty to spread that understanding, educating those around us. So, before I say farewell, I want to remind you of a few things: "Leadership is taking care of yourself and empowering others to do the same." "Be grateful. But do not JUST be grateful. Be grateful AND brave. Be grateful AND ambitious. Be grateful AND righteous. Be grateful AND persistent. Be grateful AND loud. Be grateful for what you have AND demand what you deserve." And finally that, "you were never little red riding hood, you were always the wolf" This week we learned that, as women, we were strong and powerful. You can either use that power or squander it, the choice is yours, so choose wisely. I love you all. Thank you.