



AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF MISSISSIPPI

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# *Boys State* **2020**

Educating the leaders of today for better  
government tomorrow

For God and Country

Hosted by:  
University of Mississippi

**Sunday, May 24th – Saturday, May 30th**

[www.msboysstate2020.com](http://www.msboysstate2020.com)



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Dear Student:

It is our hope that you will apply to attend the 2020 Session of American Legion Boys State in Mississippi. The 2020 session will take place on the campus of the **University of Mississippi** during the week of **May 24th – May 30th, 2020**. If accepted, you will join roughly 400 of Mississippi's most outstanding young men, each representing high schools, communities, and local American Legion Posts. You will have the opportunity to become involved in the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial operations of state government, as well as governmental activities on the county and municipal levels. You will learn more about the operations of state, county, and municipal government in one week than in an entire year of classroom civics instructions, and you will have fun doing it! Boys State is one of the most rewarding experiences that you will ever have. You will meet other young men who will be the future leaders of this state and country. Mississippi Boys State Alumni include Governors, US Representatives, US Senators, Attorneys General, as well as Chief Justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court while many more are your doctors, attorneys, and other community leaders.

Each day, you will be able to ask questions of elected officials and our states top leaders when they address the Boys State delegation. You will also have the opportunity to participate in mock trials, pass laws in a legislature, serve on a newspaper staff, compete in various sports, and perform in a talent show. Most importantly, you will develop friendships that will last a lifetime. Enclosed in this packet are several documents that you should carefully read. If you have any questions, please feel free to visit our website at [www.msboysstate2020.com](http://www.msboysstate2020.com). Also, follow us on twitter and like us on Facebook to stay up to date on form deadlines, speaker updates, and much more.

Sincerely,

Boys State Staff, American Legion  
Department of Mississippi



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### WHAT IS BOYS STATE?

The American Legion is dedicated to strengthening America. We believe there is no better way to this end than to work with our nation's youth in order to prepare them for the tasks they will face in the years to come. The American Legion, through its youth activities programs, plays a leading role in the development of tomorrow's informed, responsible citizens. The American Legion's programs of Boys State and Boys Nation are our finest examples of citizenship instruction for youth.

Boys States are quite uniform in program structure through each Department (state) of the American Legion. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia conduct a Boys State program annually and more than 28,000 young men participate in these civic workshops each year. Through the week-long program, the young citizens learn how city, county and state governments function by actually doing the job themselves. Eligibility for all Boys State citizens requires them to be juniors in high school, with one year remaining before their graduation. This allows the young man the opportunity to apply his "practical experience" in government to his senior year in high school, and at the same time endorse and promote the program among fellow students.

### A "LEARN BY DOING" APPROACH

The purpose of American Legion Boys State is to identify young leaders and instill in them constructive attitudes toward the American form of government. The program attempts to show that a democracy needs an intelligent citizenry and a moral, honest and impartial administration responsive to the will of the people. Boys State should be thought of as a mythical 51st state with the Constitution, Statutes and Ordinances constructed by its citizens to govern themselves. Citizens not only will be required to review knowledge already acquired concerning the political machinery of state, and local, government but they will find themselves performing exactly the same functions as real office holders in the everyday world. Every delegate to Boys State will hold elective office. Delegates learn the duties of various city, county, and state officials and introduce and argue bills in their own legislature. Each citizen will have the opportunity to learn for himself that his government is exactly what he makes it.

The entire program is non-partisan. Problems will be considered without reference to existing political parties and will be free from propaganda. The sole purpose is to enable the delegate to grasp the meaning and responsibilities upon which he will be called to assume when he becomes an adult. It should be distinctly understood that the selection and assignment of citizens to parties is in no way connected to existing political parties in Mississippi. Boys State "political parties" are called "Nationalists," "Federalists," and "Independents". They are purely mythical and none of the principles typifying any of the existing parties will be adopted. In this way, we try to assure a democratic government in its purist sense.



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### **HISTORICAL SKETCH OF BOYS STATE**

Boys State was originated by the Illinois Department of The American Legion in 1934. The plan was adopted by the National Organization in 1945 and has since been put into operation in forty-nine states. Although Hawaii does not operate a program, it does send delegates to attend the program of other states. American Legion Posts in the Panama Canal Zone, the District of Columbia, and Mexico have, in the past, sent delegates to Boys State in Mississippi. The American Legion Department of Mississippi incorporated Magnolia Boys State on May 2, 1939 and the first session was held in Jackson, June 11-17, 1939, and every year thereafter, except for 1943, 1945, 1949, and 1970.

In 1955, the name was changed from Magnolia Boys State, Inc. to The American Legion Boys State, Inc. Since the inception of Boys State in Mississippi, over 20,000 delegates have attended these sessions. Those chosen to attend have just completed their junior year of high school and possess qualities of honor, character, courage, leadership, service, and discipline. Each local American Legion Post is assigned a quota by the Department Headquarters and where this quota more than one, the Post usually offers the opportunity of sponsorship to civic clubs, churches, schools, Boys State alumni, civic leaders, businesses, and other responsible organizations. On occasion, when a young man is deserving but a sponsor cannot be located, he may be sponsored by his own family through his local American Legion Post or State Department. The cost to sponsor a delegate for Boys State is \$275.00.

The American Legion Boys State program in Mississippi is recognized as one of the most outstanding and successful Boys State programs in existence. Mississippi's Boys State is known for its leadership development and motivation, its dynamic and energetic young staff, and for the exceptional support the program receives from Legionaries from across the state. Our Boys State was the first program in the nation to include a "College and Military Service Information Day" where representatives from every state college, university, various branches of the Military, and cadets from the U.S. Military Academies actually come to Mississippi's Boys State to speak to the young men about post-high school plans. It is not uncommon for delegates to actually discover scholarship opportunities while at Boys State.



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### SCHOLARSHIPS

Participants to Boys State are eligible for scholarships from the American Legion Department of Mississippi and Posts totaling over \$35,000.00. One lucky Boys State Delegate will receive the Harold F. Hale Scholarship worth \$2,500.00. The American Legion Department of Mississippi also presents scholarships of \$1,500.00 and \$1,000.00. The Senior Staff will also choose a delegate to be eligible to receive the Samsung Scholarship.

Additionally, multiple scholarships will be offered by Millsaps College, Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi. A Boys State Certificate will be presented during our awards ceremony concluding Boys State to Delegates who complete the entire program. This will serve as proof of completion for Delegates wishing to take advantage of these scholarships.

#### **Millsaps College**

- Boys State, “Big Eight” Scholarship
  - o Award Amount: \$4,000 [\$1,000/year]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as one of the “Big Eight” elected officials and completion of a short essay, no more than 500 words, reflecting on how Boys State has shaped their educational and career goals.

#### **Mississippi State University**

- Boys State Governor and/or Boys Nation representative
  - o Award Amount: \$6,000 [\$1,500/year]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as Governor to their state OR the state delegate to Boys Nation. Must have a scholarship GPA of 3.0.
- Boys State Scholarship
  - o Award Amount: \$1,000 [one-year only]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen or transfer student (with university specified credit hours) who participate in Boys State. Must have a scholarship GPA of 3.0.

#### **University of Mississippi**

- Boys State Governor and/or Boys Nation delegate
  - o Award Amount: \$4,000 [\$1,000/year]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as Governor to their state OR the state delegate to Boys Nation
- Boys State Scholarship
  - o Award Amount: \$1,000 [one-year only]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who participate in Mississippi Boys State

#### **University of Southern Mississippi**

- Boys Nation delegate Scholarship
  - o Award Amount: \$4,000 [\$1,000/year]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who are named as one of the state delegates to Boys Nation
- Boys State Scholarship
  - o Award Amount: \$1,000 [one-year only]
  - o Eligibility: Entering freshmen who participate in Mississippi Boys State