Youth & Government

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WHO IS IN YOUTH & GOVERNMENT?

3,000+ teenagers from across California grouped geographically through local YMCAs. Known as delegations, these groups consist of anywhere from 3 to 120 delegates and uphold decades-long customs and traditions. At home, delegations meet weekly to prepare for three annual statewide conferences. Any delegate from anywhere in the state can opt to run for a statewide office such as the Youth Governor of California.

WHEN AND WHERE IS YOUTH & GOVERNMENT?

The first two training and election conferences are held in mid-November and mid-January in Fresno. These events prepare youth for their roles at the formal Model Legislature & Court conference held over five days in mid-February at the State Capitol in Sacramento.

STORY

Youth and Government is a feature-length story about three teens who emerge as the final candidates for Youth Governor of California. Inside of the Youth and Government program 3,000+ teens from all over the state participate in a fully functioning mock government that takes over the entire California State Capitol for five days.

Told against the backdrop of the frenzied 2018 youth governor race, Youth and Government is a classic competition story that plays out as we see a field of twenty-four candidates reduce to six at a conference in November and then down to three at the second conference in January.

TIMELINE
NOV 10-12, TRAINING CONFERENCE ONE
Fresno California
JAN 13-15, TRAINING CONFERENCE TWO
Fresno California
JAN 15-FEB 15
Various CA Hometowns
FEB 15-18, MODEL LEGISLATURE & COURT
Sacramento

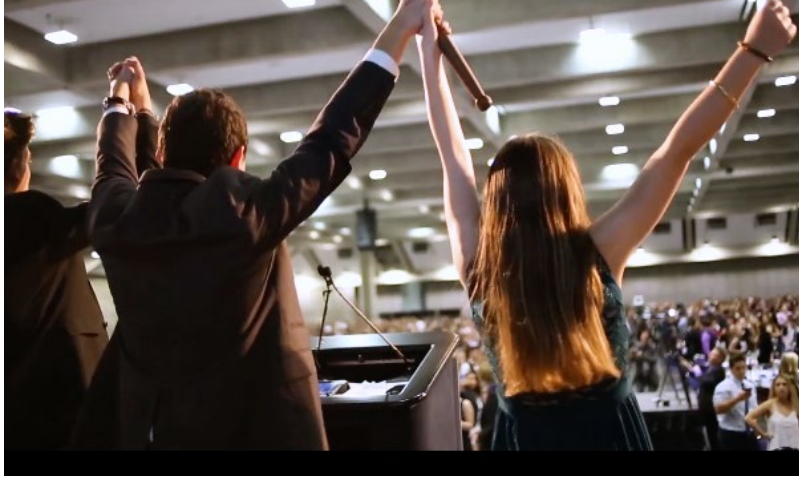
The three finalists then begin their general election as they work diligently back home to craft their campaign. Alongside the pressures of traditional teen life, the candidates must rally and lead a campaign team of their peers. Together, and with the devoted support of their delegation, they develop a platform, write speeches, even create media following the program's campaign finance bylaws. Their focus and determination at home will prepare them for the big show: the third and final conference in Sacramento.

In February, the campaigning unfolds in the halls and rooms of the California State Capital. During the second day of the Sacramento Conference, a private ballot vote eliminates one of the three

On the last evening of the conference, a final election takes place during a heart-pounding vote at the Sacramento Convention Center. All 3,000 participants cast their votes in a caucus roll call as the two candidates nervously watch.

Two twenty foot photos of the candidates sit side-by-side with a real time vote count ticking towards a winner.

On the campaign trail, in the hometowns, on the floor of the California Senate, and at the final election, Youth and Government the film will scour the psyches of these three incredible teen candidates to reveal the exhaustive, exhilarating, and heartwarming reality of the young and politically motivated in America today.



GOVERNOR CANDIDATES

Bayo Collins

"I'm a junior, it's time to step it up
and go for the best position.
You gotta shoot for the stars
to land on a cloud."

Aidan Blain

"I want to be a real person
to them and not just
some youth governor.
I don't want to be a candidate
I want to be Aidan Blain."

Alex Goldbeck

"I'm here because we are
resilient and dedicated to getting
our voices heard today."

Solomon Kim

"That's my platform, seeking discomfort, being comfortable with the uncomfortable. And what's more uncomfortable than running for youth governor?"

Piper Samuels

"I don't think adults can fully understand the amount of actual work that we put into this program."

Tate Oien

"This next generation is going to be a generation that changes people's minds about what makes someone a politician, about the morality of politics in general."

HOMETOWN

Once the second election occurs in January, the three remaining candidates will spend exactly one month preparing for the final conference in Sacramento. During this time we will get to know each of the three main characters in an intimate hometown setting that is as varied as the candidates themselves. How do seemingly normal kids put together the unique mix of self-belief, shamelessness, purpose, and charisma that it takes to run for political office?

Between life at home, school, and most importantly the mental and logistical preparation for the campaign trail, the hopes and fears of each teen will paint a picture of how young people perceive the campaign and election process.

TIMELINE

NOV 10-12, TRAINING CONFERENCE ONE: Cover party primaries, cover the top six winners.

NOV-JAN: Parent releases, phone and skype video interviews with top six.

JAN 13-15, TRAINING CONFERENCE TWO: Follow top six throughout conference, cover election of top six down to top three.

JAN-FEB: Film in hometowns of top three candidates leading up to final election in Sacramento.

FEB 15-18, SACRAMENTO: Cover top three campaigns in the actual California Legislature. Film live statewide roll call vote for final winner.

MESSAGE FROM THE FILMMAKERS

How do presumably ordinary people, in this case kids, acquire the mix of ambition, stamina, and sometimes shamelessness, that propel them to office? This is our key question.

The backbone of the American political system is public service, elections, and the campaign process. Debate is heated, convictions are deep, echo chambers are real, and legislators are uncompromising, but the fundamental truth is that anybody can run for office. But who would? Who would subject themselves to what the adult system brings to bear on a citizen who wants to perform this essential service? We want to look towards young people for insight.

On the eve of the 2020 election, we want to make a poignant, yet evenhanded commentary on the broader topics of service, candidacy, the political process, youth engagement, collaboration, as well as divisiveness, disagreement, and otherness.

As the political drama unfolds and the teen candidates rise and fall, we will be there, cameras rolling. And while we've been entrenched in this program for decades, it has become clear that now, more than ever, is the right time to tell this story. Because for a brief moment in February, in the halls of California's capital, the children are the adults in the room.

HALMY BROTHERS BIO

Our professional work has spanned a decade as a producer, director, and editor team. From Emmy nominated issue-driven work for the County of Los Angeles, to incarceration reform stories in collaboration with The Ford Foundation, to staff roles on Sundance-bound feature documentary projects, to a recent PGA award-winning global broadcast documentary series for VICE, we pride ourselves on telling contemporary, issue-driven stories through compelling people.

Jaron and Matthew Halmy have over 15 years each of experience inside of the Youth and Government program. Both were participants and statewide officers as high school students, as well as volunteer counselors for the Culver City delegation.

From 2013-2016, they volunteered to film the program as a way to aggregate potential footage, as well as to provide the Youth and Government executive team with quality content for the marketing efforts. In addition, an amateur feature length documentary was made in 2005 about the Culver City delegation's youth governor candidate.

Thank you

Jaron and Matthew Halmy

matthew@halmybrothers.com
310-365-6053

jaron@halmybrothers.com
310-617-5278

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