



# The Citizen Builder

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By Avry Zow

## THE KIDS, THE SUMMER, AND POLITICS!?!?!?

It's summer break; kids will be at the beach, others are going to another state, and some will be traveling out of the country for a vacation to remember. However, for a select few, some will be attending Tuscaloosa, Alabama before they kick off their summer plans. What could possibly be happening there that would make students give up their time in the sun or relaxing on the couch you might ask?

Well the answer is...ALABAMA BOYS STATE. Boys from all across Alabama are selected by their schools for their overall character, and what schools would consider the "role model" student.

These students spend a full week doing various activities that are created; moreover, in hopes of bringing togetherness, create friendships, and to discover qualities or passions that they had not realized they had.

Sounds like an opportunity of a lifetime, right? Nevertheless, some students that are selected don't attend this program and some that go don't try to be involved.

That can't be right, it's a chance to visit one of the top schools in Alabama and even explore parts of the campus without having to schedule a college visit. How could this be so? I believe the reason why this opportunity is missed is because of the social stigma and rumors that Boys State is just simple politics.

I'm sorry to say, I believed that this organization was just politics. I came here because I felt honored to be chosen by my school and felt personally obliged to attend because my older brother went as well. However, in my first day in attendance I came to realize that this place.

The University of Alabama doesn't just host national champions, but it also hosts an organization, Alabama Boys State, that inspires youths to be aware of the world around them and to push for change in our nation, in our world. How they can be the difference that can change how our nation is turning. How our character can develop and further our communities. How being genuine, truthful, and humbled can pave the way for the next generation.

I will admit that Boys State contains central aspects of government and politics; however, is that a bad thing and something not to look into at young age? I believe most children are pointed into the direction of political parties and beliefs by the parents, instead of trying to let them grow without hearing the sides of others and containing ignorant ideas. Why not let them come to a place where they can express their ideas but also exercise in hearing from others without being disrespectful.

Too often we see politicians bicker about being right and not ever admitting to when they are wrong. If we can change that perspective in young individuals that it is okay to being wrong, then it can lead to creating change in our country.

So for everyone out there that is still wondering what Boys State is, come see yourself. Experience the bonds we share, the knowledge we obtain from others, and memories we create that are unforgettable. If you get chosen don't shy away or fall prey to what you hear without experiencing it yourself and join ALABAMA BOYS STATE.

## What Does Your Party Mean?

By Jackson Olmstead & Ethan Bell

Possibly the most important aspect of Boys State, deciding how each candidate makes their case as the best choice for their respective offices, is creating a vision for the two parties at Boys State; the Nationalists and the Federalists.

At the beginning of Boys State, both parties begin as a blank slate, eagerly awaiting the Party Conventions, where the Nationalist and Federalist delegates split into two committees. These committees, the Rules Committee and the Platform Committee, hold the most say in what will ultimately be the base strategy by which candidates will run for their offices. After both the rules and platform are drafted, they are presented to the party as a whole, and are approved by way of the Party Chairman.

Earlier this Monday, the Party Conventions convened for the second time shortly after breakfast to decide the platforms of their parties. At the end of the debating session after lunch, the parties made their final decision on their basic interests (see box below).

Looking at the list of party platforms, one might notice some striking similarities between the two, especially the legalization of marijuana and their stances on the creation of a lottery. Federalists took the initiative to legalize marijuana, even going as far as to pardon those indicted on charges relating to marijuana possession. Nationalists, however, did not clarify this element in their ratified platform. Federalists simply said they would allocate funding for education and welfare of citizens, but Nationalists went as far as to give actual percentages to which the lottery funds would be given to education and infrastructure.

These similarities between the two parties open the door for asking questions and creating dialogue between the Party Chair and you, as the delegate. As we all have quickly learned this week, dialogue between those in charge and the citizens is an essential component to a successful democracy. Take the opportunity to question the decisions of your party, and hold those in charge accountable.

### Federalist Party Platform:

- Legalize marijuana
- Pro-lottery
- Active shooter training for teachers
- Keep social security system
- Drug screenings and job proof for welfare
- Against universal healthcare
- Sex education

### Nationalist Party Platform:

- Legalize marijuana
- Pro-lottery
- Pro-life
- Pro-gun
- Flat rate tax (% of income)
- Privatize healthcare
- Fund state parks
- Fund hydroelectric energy

## **SPORTS**

By Dawson Camp

Alabama Boys State Sports *(as reported by deadline)*

<b>Cities</b>	<b>Softball</b>	<b>Basketball</b>	<b>Ultimate Frisbee</b>	<b>Soccer</b>	<b>Volleyball</b>	<b>Academic Bowl</b>
1-2	Bye	Bye	Bye	Bye	Bye	Bye
3-4	10-9	50-31	9-4	3-0	0-2	
5-6	19-8	39-31	4-9	0-3	2-1	50-190
7-8	0-15	31-35	6-8	1-4	2-1	8W
9-10	13-0	25-49	3-7	6-1	2-0	9W