

Dear American Legion Members:

I'd like to thank your organization for providing me the opportunity to participate in Girls State. Unfortunately I am not able to attend your meeting in person to tell you about my week at Girls State. I had so many amazing experiences and met lots of talented young women. I have studied about our government in school but the hands on experience at Girls State allowed the opportunity to learn first hand how our government works. In addition, I learned communication, organization, and leadership skills that I am certain will continue to benefit me in life and whatever career I choose.

The girls I met during the week were wonderful. Although we had various interests which ranged from dancing to managing the school wrestling team, we bonded through a common goal "to make our Girls State experience the best it could be". Despite our group's diversity, we gained a common allegiance to our mythical city. We all worked together to run our city as effectively as possible. The team building exercises helped us build trust and confidence in one another. Sharing stories of our various schools and hometowns also provided a broad base of knowledge to draw upon in running our city.

Throughout the week we held political campaigns and elections. As one of our city's alderwomen, I helped decide who to put on our party's ballot. I now realize how difficult it is to make such political decisions. I also ran for Recorder of Deeds in the county elections and State Treasurer in the state elections. In doing so, I had to overcome my fear to speak in front of so many people. I am proud that I found the courage to do so and feel that I made quite an accomplishment in a few short days.

I also participated in various activities during week including band and the assemblies which were full of excitement and enthusiasm. The talent show provided a chance to see some of the talent that had been brought together. During the week we also heard from a number of speakers. I found their stories to be very inspirational. I learned so much from their experiences and the opportunities available in public service. I also enjoyed hearing about the history and different programs of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary.

These are just some of the many wonderful experiences I had at Girls State. Besides gaining a more comprehensive concept of how our government works, I gained new friends and memories that will last a lifetime. Thank you so much for allowing me to participate in this fine program.

Sincerely,

Shannon Klaus
Liberty High School