



Statesman Goedde | Post 164

I would like to start out by saying thank you to the Post for giving me an **opportunity of a lifetime** and sending me to Texas Boys State. I regret not being able to show up to the actual in person meeting but luckily, I can still share my experiences with the Post.

Going into the program I thought I knew what was going to happen and how the week would play out, but I quickly learned that Boys State is a lot more fun than I expected and also that Boys state is a lot more walking than I think anyone anticipated. I enjoyed every bit of the fast-paced week including to my surprise the food. I expected the food to be like the plastic they feed us at school, but for the most part it was excellent. It was great to have a fast-paced and sometimes confusing week that started right as we got off the bus keeping you on your feet from the get-go. Later in the week after being elected to the House I learned through trial and error how the parliamentary process works and how to effectively coordinate bipartisan agreements.

This was probably **one of the most influential weeks of my life** because of all the learning about politics, leadership, and debate. I feel as though **now I have an advanced view of politics that will serve me well into my adult life as I continue to learn more**. I specifically learned a bunch about the Texas government system through my service as a Nationalist House of Representative member. I believe I got a totally different perspective on the Boys State experience because in the house we focused on passing legislation and some debate mixed in with that. I now understand the parliamentary standards including the way to talk, debate, and motion for different actions like taking a break or having the house focus on a certain point.

Overall, I had a great time bonding with my fellow Turner City Boys especially at rec time where we ran dodge ball up until we lost in the very last game. I believe I made lifelong friends through this program and learned valuable leadership skills that will serve my Family, our community, our state, and our country. Once again, I would **like to say how grateful I am for the opportunity that the legion has afforded me** by allowing me to attend Boys State.

Statesman Uberecken | Post 164

I would like to thank the members of Post 164 for blessing me with the opportunity to be a part of such an established and prestigious program. I have walked away with a **greater knowledge and a deeper understanding of the inner workings of politics and how our great state and country operate**.



SOME THOUGHTS FROM 2023 STATESMEN

AUGUST 2023

My time at Texas Boys State changed me. It stretched my leadership capabilities, it stretched my mental toughness, and it encouraged me to be a better man. From doing the worm across the stage to excite my party as a party whip to meeting with state dignitaries to hear about their personal experiences, every situation held great value to me. The two roles that taught me the most were the experiences that resulted from my position as Mayor and representative on the Platform Committee. By the end of Day 1, I found myself elected Mayor of Gibson City and serving on the Platform Committee. **Imagine 30, 17-year-old strangers, gathered in a room charged with the task to agree on hot topics like immigration, abortion, and gun laws.** We had different backgrounds, different perspectives, and held different convictions.

The voices in the room were loud. I knew that I could get loud and likely get my point across and move forward with my ideas. As a 6'3, 2-year varsity offensive lineman, I am not intimidated by face-to-face showdowns, but I was quiet. I began listening and asked myself, what is their "why?". How did they come to this opinion? **Because I listened and didn't just argue, I realized I was becoming a bridge builder,** intentionally building relationships with those on both sides of the room. When everyone felt known, they felt eager to contribute which led them to a willingness to unify and support one another. This **led to deep relationships and a sense of pride that was unmatched.** We ended the week no longer as strangers but as a band of brothers.

Boys State was an opportunity of a lifetime and I am excited to see what results from the tight friendships I have formed and the many lessons I learned.

Statesman Rigatos | Post 164

My experience at Boys State was truly one that I would never forget. On the bus ride to the UT Austin Campus, I was thinking to myself about the quote used to describe Boys State, "A week that shapes a lifetime", and wondered how much that would really apply to my own experience. I knew going in that it would be something that I would remember for a long time, and that it would be something that will teach me lessons and help me grow as a person, but I was slightly unsure of to what extent this week would actually result in an experience that shapes my life.

Now having completed Boys State, I can easily say it was one of the best experiences of my life, and truly something that will stick with me, and shape who I am for the rest of my life. On the first day, I could already feel the enthusiasm from other statesmen. Registration was still going on, hundreds of keen young men awaiting to be given their ID, those that already



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had theirs were walking down the lines of the other statesmen waiting to be checked in, introducing themselves, what position they would want to run for, and engaging discussions in various policies. Statesmen came up to me, already having slogans made and seemingly having their heart set on various positions of state government that I didn't even know existed. Even before Boys State really began for me, I was already learning. After I was checked in and got my badge, I headed to my dorm, there I met my cities counselors, and also began to introduce myself to the rest of the gentlemen in my city (Winters City!). In my city, I met people from all parts of Texas, from Abilene to Pflugerville, the Woodlands to College Station, from Dallas to Denton.

I found it very exciting that for the next week, I would have to cooperate and live with these complete strangers, each with their own lives and stories. **I quickly made friends, and I am glad to say that a few months later I am still talking to over a dozen of the men not just in my city, but also outside of it.** On the first day, after everyone in each city was finished being checked in, we headed to attend the first General Assembly of Boys State 2023. These General Assemblies would go on to be some of my favorite parts of Boys State. One that I particularly remember was when James Olson, the former chief of counterintelligence in the CIA talked about his experience in the agency.

Furthermore, a quote that was said by a former general from the army stuck to me, the General was talking about how on tombstones, there are two dates, your birth, and your death. Many people seem to focus on them quite a bit, but what everyone seems to ignore is the most important part, the dash separating those two dates. That dash is what represents our life, our experiences, the people we meet, and ultimately how we use our precious time on earth to change ourselves, the people around us, and the world. **This idea of “living the dash” to the fullest really changed my perspective on how important it was to make sure I am always living the life to the fullest and being most productive.** When I got back home from Boys State, one of the first things I told my parents was this quote, my father was particularly fond of it as well because he keeps talking about how he is telling it to everyone at work, which I think is great.

Meanwhile, my political experience during Boys State was less than successful. I was running for the state position of Railroad Commissioner (which to my surprise, when I began researching it, actually has nothing to do with railroads). After having amassed over 55 signatures to be eligible to run in the primary elections, I was feeling pretty confident. During the state party convention preceding the primaries, I gave a speech that hyped up the crowd



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pretty well, so I was thinking that my chances were decent to pass the primaries. Well, I was wrong, I didn't earn enough votes to make it to the general election.

From then on, I focused on campaigning for the friends I was making, and working towards getting the Federalist party (my party) to dominate the state elections on Friday. These aforementioned state elections did eventually culminate in a massive win for the Federalist Party because our gubernatorial candidate TG Barwa ended up winning governor. **The night of the state election results was one of my favorite nights of Boys State in general, all of the statesmen got to eat pizza, hang together one last time before leaving the next day, and reminisce on the memories made in the past week.**

I would like to say thank you to everyone at Legion Post 164 for giving me the privilege of going to Texas Boys State. It was **truly a week I don't think I will ever forget, and the lessons, memories, and friends I made I will cherish forever.**

Thank you once again for the wonderful opportunity,
