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“American Samoa Student Constitutional Convention 2022 Virtual Conference Opening Ceremony”

“Inclusive political participation is not only your democratic right, but also is crucial to developing policies that respond to your concerns.”

On Tuesday morning, April 12, 2022, an official opening ceremony of the American Samoa 2022 Student Constitutional Convention was held virtually with over 140 participants. This historical event is co-hosted by the Office of Political Status, Constitutional Review, & Federal Relations under the Office of the Governor, and the Department of Education.

The committee is made up of students of both public and private institutions across the territory, and took oath “to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic; to bear true faith and allegiance to the same; to take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and will well and faithfully uphold the laws of the United States applicable to American Samoa, and the Constitution and laws of American Samoa.”

“To make a difference that will have an echoing effect in generations to come, it is imperative that the youth is engaged in formal political events such as today,” stated Governor Lemanu in his opening remarks. He continued, “Inclusive political participation is not only your democratic right, but it is also crucial to developing policies that respond to your concerns. The youth of today will be leaders of tomorrow.”

The committee voted Ms. Audrey-Rose Seva’aetasi as their Student Chairperson, and will discuss three amendments facilitated by several student-leaders. The amendments are as follows:

1. Reappointment Amendment

Coordinator: Loloma Faoliu

Secretary: Va’afuti Va’afuti

2. Accountability Amendment

Coordinator: Liualevaiosina Chloe Leiato

Secretary: Matelina Aulava

3. Women’s Amendment

Coordinator: Lorrina Lee

Secretary: PrinceCharles Faleagafulu

DOE Director Talauega Dr. Samasoni in his remarks encourages students to put their knowledge into actions. He stated, “As educators, this is what we foresee from our students. To take what was learned in the classroom, and be able to apply it in real-life situations and decision-making processes. This conference is a safe space for you to be involved, be empowered, and be a part of our government as this is a government of, by, and for the people.”

Governor Lemanu shared with the committee that the Samoan Language Commission Bill was signed into law on April 5, 2022 which establishes both Samoan and English as the official languages in the Territory, and allows both languages in daily instructions. “The Samoan language is vital to our culture and identity. It is crucial that events as such allow our youth to express and practice in both languages.”

The Student-Led Constitutional Convention is a two-day event which took place immediately after the opening ceremony, and will conclude Wednesday, April 13, 2022.

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