



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

### ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- CONTACT: Dave Druker
- CONTACT: Randy Nehrt

#### **Students Participate in 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Capitol Forum on America's Future**

**SPRINGFIELD** — Secretary of State Jesse White and the Illinois Humanities Council welcomed more than 140 Illinois high school students to the State Capitol today to participate in Illinois' Capitol Forum on America's Future.

The Capitol Forum is a civic education program that challenges young people to learn about and discuss controversial issues that impact America's future.

"Illinois is one of only eight states in the nation chosen to participate in this project. I think this speaks to our state's commitment to education." said White. "In three years, we have tripled the participation in this program by high schools in Illinois. I am pleased to welcome these students to Springfield today to discuss U. S. foreign policy issues. As the future leaders of this country, I applaud the efforts of the students, the teachers and their schools for addressing and debating the challenges we face as a nation."

Illinois is one of eight states chosen to take part in the curriculum that is coordinated nationally by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project, a program of the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University.

The participating schools include Carmel High School, Mundelein; Roberto Clemente Academy, Chicago; Columbia High School, Columbia; Eureka High School, Eureka; Greenville High School, Greenville; Hinsdale South High School, Darien; Iroquois West High School, Gilman; Judah Christian High School, Champaign; Kenwood Academy, Chicago; the Latin School, Chicago; Lincoln Park High

School, Chicago; Litchfield High School, Litchfield; Maine South High School, Park Ridge; Minnoka Community High School, Minooka; Normal Community High School, Normal; St. Ignatius Prepatory School, Chicago; SIU-East St. Louis Charter School, East St. Louis; Streamwood High School, Streamwood; Whitney Young High School, Chicago; and Woodstock High School, Woodstock.

The curriculum addresses four themes - international conflict resolution, immigration, global environmental problems and international trade. Students gather in groups to examine four distinct visions for the future of US foreign policy. All the participants meet in the House Chamber to present and debate the issues in front of a panel of foreign affairs experts that will include Congressman Ray LaHood (R-Peoria), Dr. Stephen Schwark from the University of Illinois at Springfield, Dr. Richard Payne from Illinois State University and Special Agent Carl Freeman from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"More than ever before, it seems important to reflect about our nation's role in the world; and unfortunately, there are fewer opportunities to do so than we would like," said Kristina Valaitis, Executive Director of the Illinois Humanities Council and co-coordinator of the Illinois Capitol Forum Program. "The Capitol Forum prepares students to be the enlightened citizens who make democracy work."