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## **Kentucky High School Students with Disabilities Attending Close Up Washington DC Program**

### **PHOTO ATTACHMENT**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 24, 2016)**— Thirty students with developmental disabilities from across Kentucky traveled to Washington D.C. this week to participate in the Close Up Washington Flagship Program funded by scholarships from the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities (CCDD).

While in Washington, the students met with U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, U.S. Senator Rand Paul and U.S. Representative Andy Barr on Capitol Hill and attended panel discussions with journalists, lobbyists and members of the military.

“The Council is honored to support these students in learning to become better citizens and advocates for themselves and others,” said Chastity Ross, CCDD chairperson. “We look forward to seeing these students and other people with disabilities taking more leadership roles in the future.”

While in Washington, the students also had the opportunity to moderate a “hot topics” debate between guest speakers, explore the nation’s capital, and meet other high school students from across the country.

The students, who represented Pulaski County, Southwest, Danville, Walton Verona, John Hardin, Manual, Moore and Anderson County high schools, were selected from a pool of 50 applicants. Their disabilities range from intellectual to physical, with six identifying as autistic. For many of the students, this trip was first time for many things, including traveling by airplane, going to Washington D.C. and first time traveling outside of Kentucky.

The Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities (CCDD) includes 16 governor appointed individuals with disabilities and family members of individuals with disabilities as well as representatives from major state agencies that serve people with developmental disabilities. CCDD’s mission is to create systematic change in Kentucky that empowers individuals to achieve full citizenship and inclusion in the community through capacity building and advocacy.

For additional information about the CCDD, contact Stephanie Sharp at (502) 782-8604.

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*