

The youth of today face the challenge of entering a job market that has become increasingly service-oriented, technology driven and globally competitive. When considering what path to take after high school, students have an appealing option in our nation's United States service academies. An education at one of these prestigious institutions ranks among the best in the country and offers qualifying young men and women the opportunity to develop the leadership skills, technical abilities and character discipline that employers desire while simultaneously serving their country as a member of the armed forces. If you or a student in your family is interested in attending one of the nation's elite educational institutions, my office can be of assistance. Every year Members of Congress are afforded the opportunity to nominate outstanding candidates for admission into four of our United States service academies: the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. Last year, 18 of the outstanding students I nominated from the Fifth Congressional District received offers of appointment. □

As I mentioned before, completion of the program at a service academy leaves young Americans with more than a top-notch education. In addition to training students in how to be a professional officer in our nation's military, these institutions teach skills that are invaluable in today's job market. Graduation from the one of the academies ensures a successful future for today's young men and women, both for those who pursue a career in the military and for those who enter

the job market after fulfilling their obligations.

A glance at the academies' alumni lists provide a sense of the extraordinary caliber of education and training that has produced some of our nation's greatest leaders. Graduates of the U.S. Service Academies have occupied the upper echelons of our military and civilian leadership, have been recipients of the most prestigious awards for public service, and have served as astronauts, business executives, entrepreneurs, educators and scientists.

In order to receive a nomination from my office, one must be between the ages of 17 and 22 who is a citizen of the United States, a legal resident of the Fifth Congressional District, and is unmarried with no legal obligation to support a child or dependent. Four of the five academies, with the exception of the Coast Guard Academy, require a Congressional nomination for appointment. Interested candidates from southern Maryland should contact myself, Senator Barbara Mikulski or Senator Ben Cardin to apply.

In order to begin the nomination process, students can obtain the application packet online at my Web site www.hoyer.house.gov/services/academy.asp or can contact my Greenbelt Office at (301) 474-0119. Included in the packet are all information and materials needed to complete and submit the application, which must be postmarked and mailed to my office for delivery by October 15, 2009.

Competition for appointments in the Fifth District is very keen. I strongly encourage interested students to begin the application process in the Spring of their junior year and provide the requested information promptly. Nominations are made competitively on the basis of the composite of the candidate's academic record,

extra-curricular activities, SAT scores, and an interview with the Fifth District Service Academy Selection Board. Once the nominations are forwarded to the Service Academies, each student's eligibility is evaluated based on his or her academic and extra-curricular record, leadership skills, physical stamina and other requirements. Appointments for entrance are offered by the Academies as the students are evaluated

Students interested in attending a service academy institution may also want to attend my annual Service Academy and Military Career Forum, which will be held on Monday evening, April 23, at the Show Place Arena on Pennsylvania Avenue in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Here, you can

visit with representatives from each of the Academies, local college ROTC programs, and the military services to discuss a potential future in the military. The Services Academy and Military Career Forum will run from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. This forum is your opportunity to learn more about an interesting and fulfilling career in the United States Military.

If you have any additional questions about the application process, or the Service Academy and Military Career Forum, please contact Ms. Betty Rogers in my Greenbelt Office at (301) 474-0119.

I wish all applicants the very best of luck!

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