

# THE JERSEY STATESMAN



## THE AMERICAN LEGION MEDIA ALLIANCE



June 23, 2026

Issue #1

Volume LXXX

## Vote!

The Elections for County and Legislative offices are going on from 8:30-10:20 AM this morning. Make sure to pay attention to the speeches so you can elect the best candidate for YOU

## College Fair Day

Today, from 12-2:30 PM, dozens of colleges and universities will be attending Boys State to talk to interested Statesmen. This is happening in the Student Recreational Center. Be prepared to engage!

## World Cup

**YESTERDAYS SCORES:**  
Argentina beats Austria: 2-0  
France beats Iraq: 3-0  
Norway beats Senegal: 3-2  
Algeria beats Jordan: 2-1

**TODAY'S GAMES:**  
Portugal vs. Uzbekistan  
England vs. Ghana  
Panama vs. Croatia  
Colombia vs DR Congo

## Day One Retreat

### Justin Lambert

ALJBS 2026 started strong on Sunday, with the day characterized by outgoing delegates, an immense level of respect, and lively debate. The highlight of most people's day, including delegate Marcus Hussain, was the inaugural retreat. Throughout the beginning sessions of the day, delegates spent time with others from their city or with those who shared the same meal time; consequently, there was little opportunity to truly interact with the hundreds of delegates who make up this program. The retreat seemingly solved this issue by providing the chance to see all 800-plus delegates face-to-face. When discussing this with Marcus during dinner, he brought up an interesting point: "I never got to see the other cities' delegates face to face until that retreat." His observation captured a feeling shared by many. Before the retreat, Boys State felt large; afterward, it felt connected.

Delegates had already witnessed the scale of the program during the first assembly session. However, the significance of that moment is easily lost without genuine interaction. For someone seated in the back of the room, the crowd ahead can feel more like a statistic than a collection of individuals. That perception disappeared during the retreat. For the first time, delegates stood shoulder to shoulder with people from every corner of New Jersey, exchanging stories, perspectives, and ambitions. What had once seemed like a massive crowd became a community. In that moment, the true power of Boys State became clear: people from different backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs are brought together by a shared desire to learn, lead, and grow. The retreat transformed the program from a gathering of delegates into something far more meaningful: a reminder that leadership begins with understanding others. By the end of the evening, it was evident that Boys State is not simply about government or politics; it is about building connections that challenge us, inspire us, and ultimately make us better people.



# Local

## "I am Not a Crook!"

**Luciano Guidetti**

An unexpected petition issue during Sunday night's mayoral primary significantly altered the field of candidates in Pierce.

The incident began when Luciano, a prospective mayoral candidate, signed three separate mayoral petitions, unaware that Boys State rules permit delegates to sign only one petition for the office. As a result, all three signatures were deemed invalid. When petitions were reviewed by election officials, only Luciano and fellow candidate Ryan had submitted enough valid signatures to qualify for the ballot. The remaining candidates fell below the required four-signature threshold after Luciano's signatures were removed from their petitions.

The ruling sparked debate among citizens throughout the evening, with some questioning whether the mistake unfairly impacted the election process. While a few delegates speculated that the move was intentional, no evidence suggested that Luciano knowingly violated the rules. Luciano later issued an apology, calling the incident an honest mistake and expressing regret for its effect on the race. During his speech, a number of attendees voiced their disapproval by booing.

"This is unbelievable" said Dylan, an invalid mayor candidate. "He has completely lost my vote, and trust. I expected more from you Luciano, you were like a brother to me!"

Despite the controversy, the primary proceeded as scheduled: Ryan ultimately won the primary election and advanced to the general election, where he will compete for the office of mayor. While the petition error became one of the most discussed events of Pierce's opening night, city officials emphasized that the election rules were applied consistently and that the outcome reflected the established procedures of Boys State.



## Madison, "Mad-Skin" City Federalists Band Together

**Peter Brown**

Sunday, June 21st, 2026. Madison City NJ, a seaside town with a population of 30,000, has recently come under fire over their handling of hurricane relief and environmental restoration. Dubbed "Mad-Skin City" by critics of their topless beaches, City Four is also struggling with bio-waste runoff originating from St. Dominic Municipal Hospital in Adams City. Wealthy homeowners and businesses residing in Madison City are fiercely opposed to the city's ongoing dune building efforts because of the demolition of valuable beachfront real estate that needs to take place in order for the beach to be built. Residents are most concerned with the allocation of Federal and State Aid given to the city after it was rocked

# Local

by a devastating hurricane which destroyed or damaged hundreds of houses. The current Madison City administration is fighting a war on multiple fronts and they are losing badly. The Federalists of Madison City believe that they are the solution.

The Federalists claim to be a party dedicated to positions that benefit the residents and environment of Madison. They are setting out to protect beaches with dunes while also providing solutions for the land-owning entities who oppose them. One of the solutions comes in the form of monetary compensation. The Federalists look to employ a myriad of different economic incentive programs to make the interests of land owners and those in favor of the dunes align. The party is also looking into pursuing an aggressive lawsuit against Adams City in regards to the medical waste polluting Madison City waters.

The leaders of the Federalists exiting the primaries going into the main election were as follows: for potential Councilman Dev, Abdullah, Jake “Goody” Goodman, Robbie, Evan S., Peter, and leading the Federalists as their premier mayoral candidate is Dylan Thomas. These seven paved the way for a Federalist majority in the Municipality of Madison with Dylan Thomas winning a landslide victory in the mayoral race and Abdullah, Robbie, Peter, and Dev securing victory in the race for council seats. Overall, the Federalists are in a good position to enact their policies in Madison City and are excited to make some big changes.

## It's Jonny's Birthday!

**Luciano Guidetti**

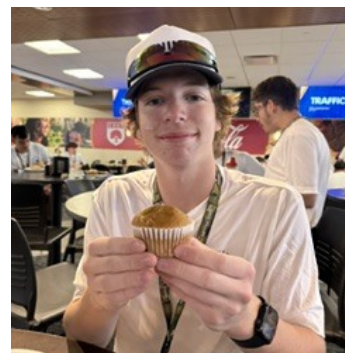
The citizens of Pierce City had an extra reason to celebrate on the opening day of Jersey Boys State: it was Jonathan Bower's 17th birthday.

Bower, who turned 17 on Sunday, spent his birthday away from home and among hundreds of fellow statesmen. Not wanting the occasion to go unnoticed, his Pierce City peers gave him a spirited Boys State birthday celebration before lights out.

“It’s an interesting experience,” Bower said. “Normally, I’d like the freedom to do whatever I want on my birthday, but this is a change I’m willing to take.” The birthday wishes from fellow delegates made the day memorable. “felt great,” he said. “It’s nice that wherever you go, people honor birthdays and are kind.”

While Bower does not currently aspire to a career in politics, he said he came to Boys State to build connections, make friends, and strengthen his resumé. Looking ahead to the week, he is eager to make the most of the opportunity. “I’m looking forward to the next week to see what I can learn, see what I can get out of it, and be the best I can,” Bower said.

From everyone at the Boys State newspaper, happy 17th birthday, Jonathan!



# Bathrooms

## The Bathroom Situation at City 10

Dwarakanath Vemuri

As we start our journey at Boys State, many delegates have complained about a quite-disappointing development: the long waits at the bathroom. With only 2 stalls and 3 showers on each floor, many delegates are extremely concerned about making it through the week. "I might just have to use 72-hour deodorant twice," Rishi Santhanam muttered while walking out of the line, disgruntled at the growing number of people waiting. Well, honestly, Rishi? I don't blame you. (Please use more than 2 swipes though.) "It couldn't be worse," remarked Tyler Carroll, watching his dreams of a quick morning routine flush right down the toilet. "We shouldn't be spending more than 5 minutes in the shower," he added, clearly upset at having to wait nearly half an hour with his towel. Undoubtedly, City 10's bathroom developments have left many statesmen worried about the week to come.

However, others argued that the bathroom situation wasn't hopeless. "Get in and get out, am I right?", Kaito Pepito argued when I asked him about his views on the matter. Others agreed with him, contending that the small bathroom encouraged productivity and efficiency. Anay Zacharia shared a similar viewpoint, although he conceded that he was planning on waking up at 5 the next morning in order to have a chance at using the restroom.

Although both viewpoints demonstrate City

10's division, there's no arguing that delegates are going to have to adjust the next few days. After all, it's a week that changes your life—and your shower situation.

## The Bathroom Crisis of City 16

Ethan Neagle

When you think of American Legion Jersey Boys State, your mind probably goes to passing ordinances, running campaigns, and learning how to govern. Yet, an aspect of the program that often doesn't get much attention is the daily life - and unexpected challenges - of living on campus. In a surprising twist, often the most challenging parts of ALJBS can come not from politics, but from everyday life.

In our section of the campus, Johnson City (#16) delegates quickly encountered a unique living situation upon arrival. After an early morning of moving in and preparing for the week's first elections, incoming statesmen searched the halls for a men's restroom, only to discover that the dorm exclusively featured women's restrooms. In spite of initial confusion, the delegates of our city quickly adapted to the circumstances and decided to use the unfamiliar facilities without complaint. Furthermore, this unusual bathroom arrangement came with a massive, unexpected benefit: unlike many other dorms at Boys State, Johnson City's building is equipped with full air conditioning. While the delegates of other cities are dealing with the summer heat, Johnson's residents are enjoying comfortable temperatures and even rooms cold enough to wear pants and a sweatshirt. It is a fortunate trade-off, proving that adapting to strange situations can sometimes yield the best rewards.

# Local

## **Working For Today, Preparing for Tomorrow: City 1, Washington**

**John Kennedy**

When one looks at all the various cities that comprise Boys State, they may be most drawn to the biggest and the boldest, allowing the small and “simplistic” to slip through the cracks. But don’t be fooled: That small, suburban town has stories that rival anything the biggest urban centers have to offer, and just as much going on below the surface. That small, suburban town is Washington, one of the most intriguing and noteworthy cities in all of Boys State. This city finds itself at a watershed, a turning point between the present and the future. Yet even as it prepares for tomorrow, the city and its legislators continue to work tirelessly to improve the lives of today. The current topic the city is confronting is a proposition the Jersey Demons hockey team has presented the city with: They are willing to move into the city and cover a third of the cost to build a new stadium, so long as the city provides the rest. This new arena would be able to serve as both the new home of the Jersey Demons and as a major concert facility for future events. This forms the foundation of the city’s watershed: if the city were to build the new arena, it would massively skyrocket the place of Washington within the public eye, bringing never-before-seen levels of tourism and attention.

However, if Washington wishes to march towards the future, it will first have to address the present; current issues must be faced to set up the city for its new advancements. Recent events pose major questions. Most notably, the tragedy at Washington City High School (in which a tenth-grade student armed with an Assault Rifle shot and killed three people) has opened up debate over the future of firearms in the city, and how best to protect our youth from the dangers of gun violence.

Washington is a place where the future is always in mind. As it continues on its path, the choices it makes today will drastically change how it shall look tomorrow. Perhaps one day very soon, that small, suburban town will awake to find that its future has become its present - and when that day comes, this city will undoubtedly be focused on what comes next.

## **The People Who Make a City Flourish: Introducing Jefferson City’s Nonpartisan Elected Officials**

**Ishaan Reddy**

When you think of elected officials at ALJBS, your mind probably goes to governor, senator, or perhaps even mayor. However we should recognize officials in Jefferson City that often don’t get too much recognition as the nonpartisan ones.

There’s the Elected Board Officials (EBO), who oversees all elections; the Guidon Bearer, who carries the city’s flag; the Photographer, who takes city pictures; the Athletic Director,

# Local

who manages the city's sports; the Newspaper Editor, who covers city stories; and the Postmaster, who delivers the city's mail. Elections for these positions were held on June 21st, the first day of the ALJBS program. The results are as follows:

|                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Federal Party Elected Board  | Jackson Przybylski    |
| National Party Elected Board | Evan Schwartz         |
| Guidon Bearer                | Nathan Ramos          |
| Photographer                 | Graham Guttadora      |
| Athletic Director            | David Oagunsola       |
| Newspaper Editor             | Ishaan Reddy          |
| Postmaster                   | Alexander "Alex" Hoit |

These positions are essential in ensuring the running of a city is smooth and efficient, and all individuals elected intend to help make the coming week as enjoyable as possible. Graham has stated he intends to capture "lasting memories", David O has promised to help organize an inter-city basketball tournament, and Alex has pledged to make sure mail is delivered on time. If they are each able to keep these promises, then there is no doubt Jefferson City will be a great city for all its inhabitants.

## Something or Everything for Everyone?

**Dwarakanath Vemuri**

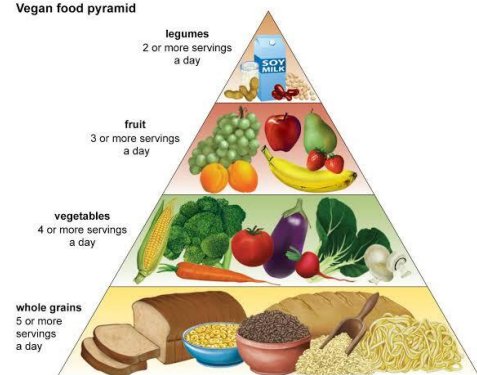
For everyone living on earth, water, sleep, and food are considered the basic necessities in order to survive. But is the third one in danger? By now, we've all had a couple meals at the dining hall, and have our opinions on the

food quality. As a vegetarian w/ food restrictions, I especially have trouble with this: for me, lunch was white rice, broccoli, pasta, and fries, and dinner wasn't much better; mashed potatoes and green beans replacing the broccoli. Now, this isn't a food review, but it does raise concerns over whether this is sustainable—even for a week. The FDA recommends 50g of protein daily for teenagers & adults—yet I'd be surprised if I got into the double digits. Now, I'm not criticizing the program's food options. Yet, for a dining hall that has "something for everyone", maybe "something" isn't "everything".

However, what is the clear solution? When ALJBS aims to keep costs low and attendance high, producing bulk quantities of classic-American food is unarguably the most mainstream option. Fixing a single plate of curry and roti isn't feasible for me, an Indian-American, which raises the question—is there a better option?

Granted, many delegates are satisfied with the current offerings, with one statesman from my local city saying that he'd "be happy to have tenders and fries all week." So while the menu clearly works for the majority, the question remains. Get your wheels spinning, delegates—let's try to change this together.

Vegan food pyramid



# Politics

## Foundations of Democracy: A Look into a Primary Election

John Kennedy

Where is an election born?

It seems to be an odd question at first. Yet upon deeper thought, it is one many people find they lack the answer to. All things start somewhere, and an election is no different. Yet we find in our nation that many people completely disregard the Primary Elections, the very first that determines how the rest shall continue. For the purposes of learning, let's take a look together into one such Primary Election, and see what makes it unique and so incredibly important.

Our election of choice takes place within the city of Washington, which finds itself faced with a number of challenges, all with different ways of approaching them. The most notable departure from other elections is the political parties - or lack thereof. Indeed, these Primaries only have a single political party. While this may be well known or obvious, what's most interesting is just how exactly that changes the nature of the debates and the elections. In our Washington case study, the Federalist Party is meeting to discuss who will represent it in the city going forward. They have some differing ideas, of course, but their end goal is not one of competition. Rather, they all wish to have their shared ideals made into reality in the best way possible, helping as many of their constituents as possible. Even as matters are debated, it becomes clear that they are just different sides of the same coin, and it is what they share, rather than what they differ on, that defines this process.

Before long, the atmosphere has changed. The scene may look alien if you were to describe it to someone as a "political debate", but that is

precisely what it is. The strange part here is that they are not shouting, or interjecting, or even trying to speak against one another. All present, when all's said and done, come together to discuss what it is that they agree upon. But why is this? After they have just spent so long debating over right and wrong, what will and won't work, and many disappointments for many people, why have they so suddenly become capable of speaking so calmly with each other?

While politics may be defined as a sport or a zero-sum game with a winner and a loser, it is far from that. In reality, after stepping back and looking at it with new glasses, politics is a game of cooperation. Everybody wins, or everybody loses. Even when some of the would-be politicians 'fail' at winning an election, they have not truly lost yet. So long as they keep a cool head, they understand that they can continue to guide the city on the path that will help people the most. That is the only way they, or anyone, can win.

We have a habit, as humans, of getting overwhelmed with expectation. We view things in a certain way because "that's just how things are", even if they never were, or were never supposed to be. Similarly with politics, we have come to expect a cutthroat war of hatred and division when, should we look back at it with a new perspective, such a viewpoint looks foolish in hindsight. Therefore, should we wish to solve what plagues our nation, perhaps the solution is to look all the way back at the beginning: at the birth of the election itself.

# Opinion

## Civic Participation Should Be Taught, Not Expected

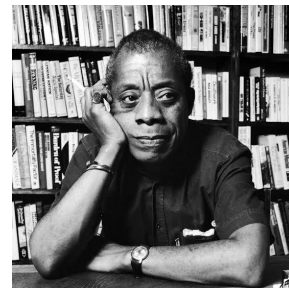
Alex Wordel

In the 21st century, a host of issues compete for the attention of young minds across the United States. From social media companies weaponizing algorithms to trap people in echo-chambers, to large swaths of “dark money” virtually deciding elections before voters even reach the ballot box, many Americans feel increasingly disconnected from the democratic process. We live in a world where civic participation can no longer be assumed; it must be actively taught.

The modern information landscape makes civic education more important than ever. Social media platforms allow misinformation to spread rapidly to a point where the line between fact and opinion can be blurred, making it impossible to decipher which is which. According to a 2025 Pew Research Center survey, roughly half of U.S. adults regularly get news from social media platforms instead of traditional news sources, such as print or television. This dramatic shift in the way Americans consume information requires

people to develop new skills in critical analysis of media. These skills will ensure that future voters are not easily manipulated by sensationalist headlines or coordinated misinformation campaigns. Teaching civic participation equips future voters with the tools necessary to evaluate information responsibly, keeping them engaged in productive political discussions without getting caught up in misinformation.

Civil Rights activist James Baldwin once argued, “the paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated”. Civic education does exactly that. By teaching young people how government works, how to analyze and determine the credibility of information, and how to advocate for change, educators can prepare the next generation of leaders to create a world where people are not just encouraged to participate in the political world around them, but are expected to thrive in it.



### Political Editors:

Justin Lambert - FED  
Ishaan Reddy - FED  
Peter Brown - FED  
Pranav Marrey - FED  
Tommy Linehan - NAT  
Dwarakanath Vemuri - NAT  
William DeMio - NAT  
Ethan Neagle - NAT

## The Jersey Statesmen

### Publisher:

Thomas Marsden

### Assistant Publisher:

Kevin Cameron

**Managing Editor:** Cole Hanna

**Asst. Managing Editor:** John Kennedy

**Layout Editor:** Jacob Williamson

**Sports Editor:** Devan Regas

**Photographer:** Luciano Guidetti

**Seminar Editor:** Xavier Dazilme

**Opinions Editor:** Alexander Wordel