



**AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY
JERSEY GIRLS STATE**



The creation of the concept of the Girls State program is credited to a Chicago teacher, Mr. Hayes Kennedy, Of Loyola University School of Law, in 1935. Mr. Kennedy was concerned about a project in existence at that time called "Young Pioneers Camps" which were being promoted by the Communist Party, which advocated the virtues of the communist system as opposed to the "uselessness" of Democracy. He felt that a counter movement should be started among the ranks of the Nation's Youth. His goal was to stress the value and importance of our Democratic form of government and to promote an effort to preserve it.

The Illinois Department of The American Legion approved Mr. Kennedy's project and in June 1935 the very first "Boys State" in the nation was held on the Illinois State Fairground. From that beginning in 1935, the program spread swiftly among other American Legion Departments and in 1937 "Girls State" was authorized as a program of the American Legion Auxiliary. The rest is history as the programs are now conducted in all 50 states.

Our American Legion Auxiliary Jersey Girls State program was first held in 1947 at Douglass College in New Brunswick. During the 80's the program was moved to Rider University (then Rider College) in Lawrenceville. In 2005 the program was moved to Georgian Court University. The 2023 session will be held June 18-22 inclusive.

Girls State is a practical application of Americanism and good citizenship training to girls that have completed their Junior year of High School. It will afford them an opportunity to live together as self-governing citizens and to inform them about the duties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of American Citizenship. They will learn government at the municipal, county and state level, as it exists in New Jersey today.

Each citizen will be pre-assigned to a dormitory, a political party (national or federal) a City and a County. She will then have the opportunity to run first for a city office or seek an appointment at the city level. After City elections are concluded, the Mayor will make appropriate appointments and will conduct all city meetings for the remainder of the program. Two cities will compromise a County and each county will also elect officials. The County officials will make the necessary appointments and they conduct meetings for the remainder of the program.

The citizens of Jersey Girls State will elect State Senators and Assemblywomen who will conduct the meetings of their respective houses and will include discussions and/or debate on bills and resolutions to be presented to all of the citizens.

A Jersey Girls State Governor and Lt Governor will be elected from the 200 delegates, who will in turn appoint members of the Cabinet and the heads of the various State Agencies. There will be time each day for a Newspaper committee to meet and will publish a newspaper at the end of the week and also the Girls State Chorus who will perform at the ceremony on Thursday. If the schedule permits, one night will be set aside as a "Talent Night" for those that wish to show off their special talents, be music, dance, singing or any variety of talents. Throughout the week, speakers will be scheduled from all phases of government and also from other areas of interest.

Girls Nation, first established in 1947, is a continuation of Girls State based on the fundamental of our Federal Government. Two girls are chosen annually from each Girls State to attend the Girls Nation session in the Washington, DC area in July. They will be asked as New Jersey's two Senators to submit a bill for consideration during the session at Girls Nation. They will have an opportunity to visit many historical sights around our nation's capital and to also meet with many prominent politicians.

Debra Noble & Laurel Matthews

Co-Directors
American Legion Auxiliary
Jersey Girls State

This bulletin may be duplicated and should be presented to the contact person at the High School, outside sponsors, news media and the delegates that are selected.