

# TENNESSEE AMERICAN LEGION

# BOYS STATE

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## GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES SPEAK TO DELEGATES

With elections scheduled Wednesday evening, Jacksonian party chairman Luke Potter nominated Griffin Duvall of McCollum City for governor, while Johnsonian party chairman Walt Heatherly nominated Samuel Sullivan of Summitt City for the office. Ovi Kabir placed independent candidate Rafiq Malek of Summitt City into nomination. Each candidate gave a speech to the entire Boys State assembly.

Duvall said his dad came to Boys State 25 years ago and said success takes hard work. "Boys State is meant for leaders. We all have the credentials. It is a blank slate for the hard workers. Hard work beats talent when talent refuses to work hard." Duvall used the TTU water bottle as an example of how the governor can change things. His idea for changes included access to wi-fi and bringing back visors. "The best leader is the most humble servant."

Sullivan serves as Jr. ROTC company commander at Cookeville High School. In his address, he quoted Proverbs and explained his vision. "I'd like to see every individual taking advantage of every opportunity. This should be an experience that will help you through all of life. The power of an individual is amazing. A governor for the individual is a governor who unifies. I am that leader."

Malek explained why he is running. "It started out as a joke; everyone said it couldn't happen. Why not? We are here to participate and learn. You'll never know if you will win an election unless you run. I realized I had a chance. If you vote for me, it will be the first year Boys State has ever had an independent governor." Malek's proposed changes included an all-star football game, soccer, drawstring bags to carry and wristbands instead of T-shirts.

Candidates were also selected for three other state government races:

**Supreme Court:** Travis Bass (Jo), Richard Brown (Jo), Ryan Burgess (Ja), Clayton Croom (Ja), Noah Crum (Jo), Deaton Hildabrand (Jo), Mason Hilliard (Ja), Levi Johnson (Ja), Vincent Mancuso (Jo), Brett Neelly (Ja)

**Court of Appeals:**

Jacksonians: Jacob Bumpus, Paul Trentham

Johnsonians: Allen Childers, Jakob Couser, Emery Duke, Josiah Fox, Maylan Mehus, Nicholas Melton, Peter Minneci, Max Neveau, Brady O'Brien, Zachary Parker, Holden Shelton, Trevor Talmadge

**Court of Criminal Appeals:**

Jacksonians: Allen Davis, Jesse Ginn, Samuel Pate, Samuel Wauford, Ty Wolaver

Johnsonians: Zachary Abdo, Andrew Bumpas, Zackery Crum, Wesley Good, Justin Jones, Andrew Reed, John Sewell II, Myles Smith, Steward Whaley

## **Gov. Bill Haslam addresses delegates, conducts Q&A**

Gov. Bill Haslam asked delegates what they thought his role should be and then fielded dozens of questions about important state issues.

“You care enough to be here,” Haslam told delegates. “Talking to future leaders of the state is important. My three main areas of focus are creating jobs, managing the budget and services, and improving education. I believe managing and prioritizing the budget is the most important thing.”

Haslam gave advice on being successful and how to build relationships.

“Leadership matters. It’s my hope you will be leaders who are persistent. When you are a leader, you are changing the way things are.

“Communicate effectively. Learn how to do that. To really communicate, it means listening. People will be shocked when you listen.

“Get the relationships right, and almost everything else works out. The challenge is to not be that jerk. When you build a team, build it with people who work toward the goal and know it is not about them.”

### **Q: What were the three most important things that you learned as a youth?**

A: The folks that I know who were involved in things beyond themselves ended up staying that way all through life. People who worked hardest tended to do that in the next stages. Work really, really hard. And learn to build relationships. That means relationships with mutual respect and mutual encouragement.

### **Q: What is the most pertinent issue we need to take care of?**

A: What concerns me the most, and we’ve made real headway but we have a long way to go, is education. The pushback is so strong; it is easier to leave the status quo. But you need a fighting shot to compete against students from Beijing, Brussels, everywhere else. That’s whom you are going to be competing against.

### **Q: What is your position on Common Core?**

A: We are making great progress. Forever, our state has ranked in the 40s in terms of results students produce. We are now moving into the 30s. We need higher standards, and we are expecting more of high school students and teachers. If you are behind, you don’t have the luxury of small, incremental changes. Our responsibility is to make sure you have a really great teacher standing in front of your classroom.

### **Q: Why did you start Tennessee Promise?**

A: We have a challenge. Ten years from now 55 percent of jobs in our state will require degrees, but now only 33 percent of Tennesseans have a degree. I want to make college more of a possibility for those who think it is out of reach. Tennessee Promise will provide two years of technical school or community college free as a last dollar plan after all other financial aid has been applied.



