



American Legion Auxiliary WV Rhododendron Girls State

April 1, 2020

Dear Friends, Leaders, and Supporters of Rhododendron Girls State,

It is with a heavy heart we write to inform you that The American Legion Auxiliary Department of West Virginia Rhododendron Girls State has been cancelled for 2020. This difficult decision was made only after thorough deliberation with our program's senior leadership and based on the current national and state-wide effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We join with The American Legion Mountaineer Boys State in taking this action.

The health, safety and security of our citizens, staff and many volunteers remain our primary consideration. Throughout West Virginia, educators are working diligently to continue to engage students through unplanned and unprecedented distance learning opportunities, it seemed unfair to ask them to continue with the nomination and selection process. American Legion Posts are closed, American Legion Auxiliary meetings and activities have been canceled, several recruitment and fund-raising activities are also suspended. Many of our sponsors throughout the state are closed, out of work or not holding meetings due to our state's stay-at-home order. We appreciate our volunteers, alumni, veterans and sponsors and encourage you to continue to remain safe and follow the guidance of your local health officials.

Girls State Registrar Ann Buchanan and Department of West Virginia Secretary Paulette Anderson will provide any necessary refunds or return unprocessed payments in the coming days. We felt it prudent to make this decision now as the uncertainty and duration remain in question. We will work together to find a way forward and ensure this year's eligible young ladies will have an opportunity to be part of the program in the future. We will not forget, but simply delay our celebration of the American Legion Auxiliary's 100th Anniversary as well as our focus on the 100th anniversary of the women's right to vote as set forth in the 19th Amendment.

Many questions remain and we will share details as they become available. We would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to all the American Legion Auxiliary members, school personnel, sponsors, host site Davis & Elkins College and our Girls State staff and volunteers for all their efforts already put forth for the 2020 program. We are blessed with your support and look forward to working with you as we immediately begin planning for the 2021 session.

If you have immediate concerns or questions that need to be answered, please contact us via email at help@wvgirlsstate.org. We will respond as quickly as possible. Stay safe and be well.

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