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***For Immediate Release***

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### **American Legion Boys State to take Place at Eastern**

Willimantic, Conn.—Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) will host nearly 300 high school students as well as state legislators and officials during the 63<sup>rd</sup> American Legion Boys State. This will be the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Boys State at Eastern.

Student delegates will arrive on campus Sunday, June 20. Boys State officially begins with formal opening ceremonies at 7:30 p.m. in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center on Eastern's north campus. Billy Ballard, a retired colonel and Korean War veteran, will deliver the keynote address.

The week-long program is formatted to educate students on how state and municipal governments operate. Participants will set up and run mock town, city, county and state elections. Students will engage in role-playing where towns are represented, mayors lobby, and representatives and senators debate and enact legislation.

Numerous state legislators and senators have been invited to speak throughout the week. This year's guests include Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who will discuss issues facing Connecticut today; Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz will give an address on Monday, June 21 at 11 a.m.; and Lieutenant Mary Beth Curtis of the Willimantic Police, who will provide a workshop on sexual harassment in the workplace. Reverend Valerie Roberts-Toller will deliver the annual memorial service during the opening ceremonies.

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Joseph Tarrant Jr., chairman of the American Legion Boys State Commission, praised Eastern for hosting Boys State over the years. “Eastern makes the summer program a very positive experience for young people who cannot help but return to their communities with a desire to make a positive contribution,” said Tarrant.

Phillip Haddad, chairman of the American Legion Post 19 in Willimantic agrees. “Boys State can be a turning point in a youngster’s life.”

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Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state’s public liberal arts university. ECSU serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.