

Jack Berexa, Volunteer

What is servant leadership, and how would you embody servant leadership as Governor?

For a leader to serve in a way that prioritizes others over self, I think it is critical to see intrinsic value in the system they lead. YIG holds value in my life in many self-regarding ways: it is a place to exercise my passion for debate, a place where I am surrounded by people who share my interest in policy, a place that cultivates some of the most memorable moments of my life. But in the realm of servant leadership, I don't think any of these things matters.

For a servant leader, it's the value that YIG holds in the community that's important, not the value it holds for the leader. Beneath the parliamentary procedure, sprints to the Capitol, and sweaty dances, YIG is an advocacy space. Students learn to advocate for themselves by becoming comfortable enough to share their ideas in a room of strangers, by ardently defending their resolution, or by being forced to ask a technical question in the last few minutes of session. Students learn to advocate for others when crafting and debating legislation that bring specific social issues to the minds of thousands of high schoolers and attempt to empower a marginalized person or group.

I think that being conscious of the impact the program has is so important because it determines how I frame my leadership. As a Security Council delegate, one of the most frustrating things was to see a group lose their confidence and ability to self-advocate because their resolution failed. Because of this, as Security Council President in 2019, one of my central goals was to shift the Council from a rejecting body to a constructive one. As a result, we spent more of our time seeking out resolutions with potentially veto-worthy problems and helping groups amend those issues rather than building cases against these resolutions and failing them. I would hope to carry these same principles of constructiveness and collaboration to the Gubernatorial Office. This would mean ensuring that Clerks, Speakers, Lieutenant Governors, and all other officers have a clear and direct platform to communicate with me and voice their feedback. This also means extending empowerment and respect to specifically vulnerable delegates (i.e. freshman, students from small schools, students in an unfamiliar component). And of course, this still means maintaining an efficient, well-functioning Conference, which is much easier to achieve when all delegates have clear and empowered roles.

At its core, I think servant leadership can be encapsulated by the idea of using your platform to give others a platform. For the last six years, CCE conferences have taught me, among hundreds of other things, how to transfigure my passion for social equality into words and speak those words in a way that impacts the people around me. As Governor, I would center everything I do around fostering an accepting, progress-driven community where students can be advocates for themselves and their communities.

Led Hinton, Volunteer

Servant leadership in the context of government, or mach government in this case, is all about listening to the people who elect you. John Lock and the social contract that our constitution is heavily influenced by, states that the job of governments are to serve the people, and that if the government isn't doing that then the people have the right to overthrow that government. I believe that its the job of the elected to carry out the will of the electorate.

When people run for an office they give a platform, policies they would work to enact, and just lay out a general plan for their term. What happens too often is people "change their mind" or they just dont vote how they ran. This is one of the greatest travesties in modern politics.

To me servant leadership is telling people what you intend to do to make their lives better and then doing it.

Another key aspect is making sure that you don't use political tricks to make people think you are doing a good job; being well researched is so important for day to day, just for knowing with your believe and why you believe it, but when your views are impacting other people it becomes exponentially more important. That is why my campaign for governor is based on well researched plans to help people in Tennessee.

I strongly believe that a concervitive libertarian like myself would do amazing things for our state. I think it's time that our mach legislature has someone who didn't win based on funny pineapple jokes but won based on good political plans.

Finally I believe that when you run for office you give up you free time, from the second you decide to campaign all of you time and energy and thoughts have to be dedicated to the people you are serving, or you won't do justice to the office. You can't half do any thing especially government. Also your intentions have to be pure; lots of people use politics as a way to gain power, money, and clout, but that's not what government is about it's about helping people cause change in a meaningful way that will leave a legacy on you community that they can be proud of, if the body you are governing doesnt be if it from you then you haven't done your job.

Jackson Hoppe, Volunteer

Throughout the course of history, we as humans have picked people to lead us. The Ancient Egyptians clearly had a hierarchy with a "pharaoh" at the top of the pyramid (both figuratively and literally, the pun is slightly intended). This pharaoh would serve as a military, social, economic, and religious leader. I could talk all day about leaders throughout history, both good and bad, but the pharaoh is one of the earliest examples of people selecting a leader. Once again, not all leaders have been good, per say, many pharaohs sat atop of thrones built with back breaking labor by slaves. But my point in mentioning the pharaohs is that we've always had leaders and leadership itself has evolved over time. Today we live in an era where leaders are expected to display "servant leadership" rather than just simply ruling cynically as seen in the days of old. The Robert R. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership defines servant leadership as "a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world." In short, servant leadership is caring about the needs and concerns of the masses when put into a position of power. As Spock once said in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982), "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few." Mr. Spock is most certainly right. Now you're obviously asking, "How would this kid exemplify servant leadership, a trait we heavily value as humans?" I've always wanted to help and empower other people. Sure, getting accolades and recognition is great and rewarding, but I care more about what I've done to help other people to gain those awards. In fact, I really gain more satisfaction from the help I give people rather than the plaque or trophy that I'm given for doing so. Bill Gates once said, "As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others." *THAT* is what I want to do as governor. I want to empower people; let their voices be heard. I want to forge Tennessee into a cradle of true democracy and free speech by allowing others to speak their mind for the betterment of others. As governor, I would take much consent from the people, as is intended in our founding state and federal documents, and make sure that people are truly being heard and helped for a better future for our great state. That is how I would exemplify servant leadership as the governor of Tennessee at the 2021 TNCCE YMCA YIG, Volunteer Conference.

Emerson Pope, Volunteer

Over the summer, I was given the opportunity to attend Governor's School for Business and Technology. I sat through several seminars regarding leadership in business, but the most enlightening source on leadership was a book sent to me by one of my professors. "Leaders Eat Last" by Simon Sinek is focused on servant leadership as a business philosophy. The book is titled Leaders Eat Last because in the military, higher-ranking officers eat after all of the other personnel are fed. This simple act recognizes the value of every person instead of the "most influential." Society has trained us to work for approval from our superiors, and while this is helpful in some scenarios, there are remarkable results when we focus on approval from the people who work for and with us. Companies saw major shifts in moral and profits when they focused on business plans that focused their staff before corporate wallets.

I would keep this philosophy in mind if I was elected Governor. This position is not a "resume booster" or "a prize to win just because you can". This office position is a chance to serve, to encourage civic engagement, and to empower the future leaders of America. The bills we promote may not be implemented immediately, but they inspire students to begin thinking about important issues. Youth in Government helps delegates develop informed political opinions, which in turn shapes a better tomorrow when they become the voting population.

Leaders are often recognized for being great speakers. However, a great leader knows that listening is equally as important. Every year in the halls of the capitol building, in the incredibly long line at Panera, and in the luggage room, I hear bright young students with incredible ideas for how they believe we can improve the conferences. These comments are made and then quickly brushed aside, never coming to fruition. A key part of servant leadership is listening to that feedback to create conferences that simply get better and better every year.