



Robert Bentley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Cary F. Boswell
COMMISSIONER

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kathleen McGehee
334-293-7500 or 1-800-441-7607

Hoover native selected for Washington, D.C. internship

STARKVILLE, Miss. – A senior with a double major in political science and philosophy at Mississippi State University was recently selected to serve as an advocate and ambassador for the disability community in an 11-week internship program located in Washington, D.C.

Zachary Woolley, originally of Hoover, Ala., is one of only 40 students nationwide selected for the American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD) internship program.

He cites the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS), the state agency that serves Alabamians with disabilities, for assisting him in his endeavors from an early age and throughout his life.

“You can still accomplish a lot with a disability,” Woolley said, “You can either be bitter about it, or you can channel that energy to focus on something better. My parents, ADRS and United Cerebral Palsy have all helped me see that. I’ve accomplished a lot in my 23 years, but I’m only just now scratching the surface.”

Woolley, who has cerebral palsy and a visual impairment, is the president of United Students on Mississippi State’s campus, a student organization that serves as an advocacy and support group for students with disabilities.

This is the third year Woolley applied for the prestigious internship he refers to as a “dream come true.” Last year, Woolley was considered a finalist and was even interviewed for one of the remaining slots in the program.

“I am a very determined person,” said Woolley. “After I didn’t make it last year, I thought, ‘If I can make it all the way to the interviews, I’ll be darned if I’m not going to make it to the last stage next year.’”

Throughout the summer internship, which spans from May 25 to Aug. 10, Woolley will work in congressional offices, for federal agencies, and for various nonprofit and for-profit organizations.

“We are all so proud of Zach,” said ADRS Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Cherlyn Thomley. “He is embarking on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that will not only require him to serve as a self-advocate, but also to represent and advocate for all persons with disabilities nationwide.”

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama’s children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

###

PROVIDING SERVICES TO ALABAMIANS WITH DISABILITIES

602 S. Lawrence St. ■ Montgomery, AL 36104 ■ 334-293-7500 ■ 1-800-441-7607
■ Fax: 334-293-7383 ■ www.rehab.alabama.gov