**CONGRESSMAN TRENT KELLY**



**First Congressional District of Mississippi**

**MILITARY ACADEMY NOMINATIONS**

A service academy is an academy, or college, that is run by the federal government to train officers of the Armed Forces. There are a total of five federal service academies, three under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense (DoD) and two under the Department of Transportation (DOT).

The DoD operates the United States Air Force, United States Military (West Point), and Naval Academies and the DOT operates the Merchant Marine and Coast Guard Academies. Congressional nominations are usually necessary for a person to enter any academy except the Coast Guard Academy. The Coast Guard Academy deals directly with interested persons.

***NOMINATIONS***

***A candidate may only be nominated by Congressman Kelly if he or she legally resides in the First Congressional District of Mississippi****.*

Nominations are the ***recommendations***made by Congressman Kelly to each academy. A nomination is not an appointment, and Congressman Kelly will probably make many more nominations than there are slots (vacancies) available. The Congressman may nominate up to 10 candidates for each slot. Congressman Kelly may have a maximum of five cadets or midshipmen at each DoD service academy at one time. The Merchant Marine Academy has a quota for each state, and he may nominate up to 10 candidates per year.

Congressman Kelly must be cognizant of how many vacancies he has to fill each year at each academy. He must always make sure that he will have at least one vacancy at each academy for the next year. (For example, if he has three vacancies open for a particular nominating year, he may choose to only use one of those so that he would have a vacancy for the next year, and one for the next.)

***To reiterate, please remember that receiving a Congressional Nomination does not guarantee your Appointment to an Academy. The final decision for Appointments is made by the individual Academy***.

***TYPES OF NOMINATIONS:***

There are three methods of nomination: competitive, principal with competing alternates, and principal with numbered alternates.

* The *competitive* method is the most commonly used nomination method. Under this method, the Congressman submits an unranked slate of nominees to the academy. The appointment (offer of admission) is offered to the candidate the academy chooses as the best qualified.
* In the *principal with competing alternates method*, the Congressman designates one person to whom he wishes the appointment offered, then leaves the rest of the slate for the academy to rank in order of qualification. If the principal nominee is qualified, he or she will be offered the appointment. If the principal nominee does not qualify, or for some reason refuses the appointment, the alternates compete for the vacancy.
* In the *principal with numbered alternates method*, a principal nominee is named, as explained above. The other candidates on the slate are then ranked in order of preference by the Congressman. In effect, the highest ranked candidate to be qualified will be offered the appointment.

The competitive method is preferred by Congressman Kelly because it assures the appointment of the most qualified candidates and it prevents the Congressman from ranking one constituent over another.

***REQUIREMENTS***

To be considered for an academy appointment, an applicant must first be nominated. United States Senators and members of the House of Representatives may nominate applicants who meet the eligibility requirements established by law.

The following requirements must be met by all applicants as of July 1 of the year of admission:

* The applicant must be at least 17 years of age, but not have passed his or her 23rd birthday (25th birthday for Merchant Marine Academy).
* He or she must be a United States citizen.
* The applicant must be unmarried, not pregnant, and have no legal obligation to support children or other dependents.
* Residence--Must reside within the boundaries of the First Congressional District of Mississippi.
* Skill / Fitness--Must meet the medical, physical, and academic requirements of the Academy.

Once nominated, the respective academies will determine if the individual meets the additional specific requirements necessary for appointment.

***APPLICATION PROCESS***

The official application process will require the interested candidate to **apply to the academy of his/her choice** and **then request a nomination from Congressman Kelly**. No candidate will be considered for an appointment at an academy unless they have a nomination from a congressional member, the President or Vice President. Congressman Kelly will make nominations based on the number of slots his office has available for that year at each academy. Each interested candidate’s application will go through a screening process to identify the most qualified individuals who will be successful at one of the academies. The screening process is highly competitive and is based on ACT/SAT scores, high school transcript, leadership skills, extracurricular activities, and personal recommendations. Once Congressman Kelly makes his nominations to each academy the appointment process is entirely in the hands of the academies.

Applications must be completed by ***December 1st*** to be eligible to be considered for a nomination by Congressman Kelly.

Each applicant is requested to submit the following to Congressman Kelly’s office to complete his or her application file:

* Fill out the online “Military Academy Nominations Application Form” found on the Congressman’s website at  <http://www.trentkelly.house.gov/> under the “Services” tab. Fill out the form, print the application, sign it, and mail it to: Office of Congressman Trent Kelly, Attn: Mabel Murphree, Ph.D., 431 West Main Street, Suite 450 Tupelo, MS 38804.
* Submit a one page essay on why you would like to attend a Military Service Academy and receive a nomination from Congressman Kelly.
* Submit at least three (3) personal letters of recommendation (these can be from Teachers, Pastors, Coaches, Scout Masters, etc. These letters should reference why you would be an excellent candidate for a Military Academy Appointment).
* Submit an official copy of your ACT Scores and if you took the SAT you can submit those scores as well; however, the ACT is the only mandatory scores that our office requires.
* Submit an official copy of your high school transcripts.
* Submit a photo of yourself (preferable a head shot).
* Be available for a phone or in person interview with Congressman Kelly or his designated military academy liaison designee.

***HELPFUL HINTS TO BE A COMPETITIVE CANDIDATE***

Congressman Kelly hosts an annual Military Academy Day during the fall. This is a time for interested students to visit with Academy, ROTC, National Guard, and other military representatives. This is a good opportunity to hear first-hand from the academies and military organizations and to learn of summer programs that might help a potential candidate to be more competitive when starting the official application process.

***Start Early:***

It is never too early to start asking questions. In fact, it is smart to get an early start to ensure that your resume is impressive and will garner the attention of a service academy’s selection committee.

Some students contact Congressman Kelly’s office during their sophomore year in high school and start asking questions about what courses, activities, etc. they would enable them to be competitive by their senior year. Others wait until the beginning of their senior year. However, candidates will not be able to official apply with an academy or Congressman Kelly’s office until the 2nd semester of their junior.

Spend some time familiarizing yourself with the history of each Academy—lifestyles, opportunities, purpose, and Honor Codes. If possible, set up a personal tour by contacting the admissions office or by taking a virtual tour on each website. Academy summer programs are also a great opportunity available to high school students.

Contact each Academy in which you are interested through their web-site(s) as soon as possible to complete their pre-candidate questionnaire. Before your interview, you must have applied to each Academy for which you wish to be considered. If you initially qualify, the Academy(ies) will send you application materials.

You are strongly encouraged to start taking the ACT/SAT test in the spring of your junior year. If necessary, re-take several times to raise your scores—since the Academies use test scores as a primary method of evaluating candidates. For more information concerning SAT/ACT tests and schedules, visit:

SAT: www.collegeboard.com

ACT: www.actstudent.org

The website [www.March2Success.com](http://www.March2Success.com) is a free ACT/SAT prep tool provided by the Army and available to all students regardless of their interest in the military.

***Meet Deadlines***

Due to the large number of applicants, ensure your applications are completed by the due dates. Deadlines for Nomination applications (December 1), Academy applications and ROTC applications are earlier than most other college admission programs, so start the process early.

***Seek Nominations from More Than One Source***

Due to the competitive nature of the Nomination and Appointment process, seek as many Nominations as possible. Be sure also to contact both Mississippi Senators and the Vice President of the United States. Presidential and ROTC Nominations have special application requirements and restrictions, so visit each Academy’s website for details.

**Vice President Joseph Biden**

The White House

Washington, DC 20501

**Senator Thad Cochran**

*Attn: Jo Ann Clark*

190 East Capitol Street
Suite 550
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
601-965-4459

**Senator Roger Wicker**

***Attn: Military Academy Nominations*
501 East Court Street, Suite 3.500
Jackson, MS 39201**

**601-965-4644**

***Request Letters of Recommendation:***

A good letter of recommendation should be from a person with whom you have a professional relationship. This person must be able to write about observed leader-ship skills, describe your adaptability to pressure situations, and discuss your ability to work with others in a team environment, as well as your leadership ability, activity involvement, etc. Remember: much more important than WHO you choose to write your letter is what that person is able to write ABOUT you—your abilities, strengths, and potential to succeed—rather than choosing someone based solely upon their social standing, position, and/or title. Bottom line: the writer should be someone familiar with you and can cite specific examples of your abilities.

***Additional Tips:***

Other things to enhance a potential candidate’s chances of receiving a nomination from Congressman Kelly and being selected for an appointment by a service academy are:

* An Eagle Scout award through the Boy Scout program
* Participant at the American Legion’s Boys State or Girls State summer program
* High scores on the SAT and/or ACT
* High school GPA that reflects strenuous course work
* Maintain a rigorous high school curriculum all the way through senior year. For example: taking a high level math or science course during your senior year like Calculus or Physics
* Leadership positions, i.e. JROTC, captain of a sport team, student government, class officer, leadership position in a scouting program, community service organization, church activities, etc.
* Extracurricular activities, i.e. Beta Club, Key Club, Anchor Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, National Honor Society, member of a sport team, community service club, etc.

***Don’t Give Up!***

If your goal is to become an officer in the United States Armed Forces, don’t give up if you are not selected for an Appointment. Approximately 25% of the cadets who enter each Academy class weren’t accepted upon their first attempt. Improve your chances by continuing to improve your SAT / ACT scores, preparing yourself physically for the Candidate Fitness Assessment and taking advantage of any leadership opportunities.

Also, take a look at the ROTC scholarship programs for each of the services. Links to these programs follow:

**U.S. Army ROTC**

(888) 944-ARMY

[www.goarmy.com/rotc/](http://www.goarmy.com/rotc/)

**U.S. Navy ROTC**

(800) NAV-ROTC

[www.nrotc.navy.mil](http://www.nrotc.navy.mil)

**U.S. Air Force ROTC**

(866) 4-AFROTC

[www.afrotc.com](http://www.afrotc.com)