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### **SIFMA & SIFMA Foundation Launch Annual Capitol Hill Challenge to Build Youth Financial Capability and Civics Education**

*National Educational Competition underwritten by Charles Schwab Foundation Prepares Students in Every U.S. Congressional District for their Financial Future*

**Washington, D.C., February 18, 2026** — SIFMA and the SIFMA Foundation today announced the launch of the annual Capitol Hill Challenge (CHC), a flagship national competition underwritten by Charles Schwab Foundation that continues to play a vital role in expanding access to financial education for students in high-needs schools across the country.

Now in its third decade, the Capitol Hill Challenge is distinguished by its unique model, pairing members of Congress with up to two public schools in their congressional districts. Beyond building financial knowledge, CHC promotes mentorship, civic engagement, and community connection, while opening doors to lifelong financial empowerment. Students learn the fundamentals of saving and investing while gaining firsthand insight into civics and the role of government. Since 2012, schools in every congressional district—representing 100 percent of Congress—have taken part, with a focus on increasing engagement among high-needs schools.

“We are proud to launch the 2026 Capitol Hill Challenge, a program that reflects the impact education, mentorship, and collaboration can have on young peoples’ futures,” said Kenneth E. Bentsen, Jr., President and CEO of SIFMA. “Helping students understand the importance of saving and investing early in life lays the groundwork for long-term financial success. With the continued support of the Charles Schwab Foundation, we are strengthening communities and empowering the next generation with the tools they need to pursue their goals.”

In recognition of the Capitol Hill Challenge’s impact and the broader importance of youth financial education, the Charles Schwab Foundation pledged a three-year, \$1.2 million grant to the SIFMA Foundation in 2024. The Foundation committed additional support for key technology and program enhancements designed to expand reach and serve thousands more students nationwide. This investment reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that all students of all backgrounds have access to the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an increasingly complex financial world.

“Supporting the Capitol Hill Challenge aligns directly with our mission to empower people through financial education so everyone has the opportunity to achieve financial well-being,” said Lisa Hunt, Director of the Charles Schwab Foundation Board of Directors; Managing Director and Head of International Services for Charles Schwab & Co., Inc.; and Vice Chair of the SIFMA Foundation Board of Directors. “The impact of youth financial education extends far beyond the classroom. By



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helping students build strong financial foundations, we are preparing them to make informed decisions, plan for a more secure future, and improve financial outcomes—benefiting both individuals and society as a whole.”

During the competition, CHC student teams learn the fundamentals of saving and investing and manage a hypothetical \$100,000 online investment portfolio that includes stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and cash. Participants also develop essential workplace skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking. The top 10 performing teams are recognized at a Washington, D.C. reception and meet with U.S. Representatives and Senators in June 2026.

“Financial education has the power to create and drive lasting change,” said Melanie Mortimer, President of the SIFMA Foundation. “The Capitol Hill Challenge demonstrates what’s possible when educators, policymakers, and community leaders work together. In partnership with schools and teachers, members of Congress, SIFMA, and the Charles Schwab Foundation, we are filling critical gaps in access to financial education nationwide and helping students understand financial markets and the long-term value of saving, investing, and building wealth.”

The Capitol Hill Challenge features the SIFMA Foundation’s award-winning Stock Market Game™, an online, curriculum-based financial education program that reaches more than 700,000 students each year, both virtually and in classrooms nationwide. The program strengthens understanding of fiscal policymaking, capital markets, and global economic trends, and has been shown to improve student performance in math and economics, as well as positively influence personal financial behavior among students and teachers.

Since its launch in 2004, the Capitol Hill Challenge has facilitated more than 8,500 matches between U.S. Senators and Representatives and public schools, reaching more than 180,000 middle and high school students across all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. For more information and updates on this year’s program, visit [www.stockmarketgame.org/capitol-hill-challenge.html](http://www.stockmarketgame.org/capitol-hill-challenge.html).

### About the SIFMA Foundation

The SIFMA Foundation is committed to fostering knowledge and understanding of the financial markets for young people of all backgrounds. Drawing on the support and expertise of educators and the financial industry, the Foundation provides financial education resources and tools that strengthen economic opportunity across communities and increase awareness of the benefits of the global marketplace. Since 1977, the Foundation’s flagship program, The Stock Market Game™, has put 23 million students on a path to financial independence. The program is proven to raise math test scores, financial knowledge and behavior, while reinforcing critical life skills, academic performance and college/career readiness. For more information on the SIFMA Foundation, visit [www.sifma.org/foundation](http://www.sifma.org/foundation).

### About SIFMA



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SIFMA is the leading trade association for broker-dealers, investment banks and asset managers operating in the U.S. and global capital markets. On behalf of our industry's nearly one million employees, we advocate on legislation, regulation and business policy, affecting retail and institutional investors, equity and fixed income markets and related products and services. We serve as an industry coordinating body to promote fair and orderly markets, informed regulatory compliance, and efficient market operations and resiliency. We also provide a forum for industry policy and professional development. SIFMA, with offices in New York and Washington, D.C., is the U.S. regional member of the Global Financial Markets Association (GFMA). For more information, visit <http://www.sifma.org>.

### **About Charles Schwab Foundation**

Charles Schwab Foundation is an independent nonprofit public benefit corporation, funded by The Charles Schwab Corporation and classified by the IRS as a charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Foundation is neither a part of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (member SIPC) nor its parent company, The Charles Schwab Corporation. Its mission is to educate, volunteer and advocate on behalf of those in need so that everyone has the opportunity to achieve financial well-being. More information is available at <http://www.schwabmoneywise.com/foundation>.

### **About Charles Schwab**

At Charles Schwab we believe in the power of investing to help individuals create a better tomorrow. We have a history of challenging the status quo in our industry, innovating in ways that benefit investors and the advisors and employers who serve them, and championing our clients' goals with passion and integrity. More information is available at [www.aboutschwab.com](http://www.aboutschwab.com). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



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