

The United States Senate Youth Program has been undoubtedly the most enriching and defining weeks of my life. Never did I dream of shaking hands with a sitting president, chatting with US Senators or staying in the luxurious Mayflower hotel. What I experienced in such a short period of time was a once in a lifetime opportunity that few my age are able to do. I had the honor of representing Rhode Island throughout the Washington Week. The most enriching and action packed day of the trip for me was Wednesday March 11, 2009. I had the privilege to walk the Halls of Presidents when we visited the White House, see the swing set that the first children play on, and most enjoyable hearing the President of the United States address our group. Then on top of all of this excitement, the most powerful person in the world took time out of his busy day to shake hands with every one of the student delegates. Although I was not one of those who refused to wash my hand, I will never forget the several seconds when I addressed the President and shook his hand. Although this is a tough act to follow, I will always remember so much more from this amazing week. I was very fortunate that both my Senators Reed and Whitehouse attended the annual senate reception and signed my scholarship award. I had a very lengthy conversation with both Senators, despite the Supreme Court dinner that awaited them, and appreciated the time they spent with me. In my opinion, this spoke volumes about their character and will be something that I will never forget. As for the meals, well I am still working off the several pounds that I gained from eating the delicious spreads that were presented all week. All joking aside, the speakers that we had at our meals, from the Dep. Secretary of State to the Chairman of the FDIC, provided valuable insight into their respective fields that I felt were the cornerstone of the program. Aside from all the speakers and VIP tours and treatment, I must say one of the most valuable thing that I will take away from this week are the new friends from all around the country that I had the opportunity to meet. Never before had I been in a situation where so many points of view or geographical areas were represented. This provided our sometimes-heated debate with a unique perspective, seldom present in the conversations that I have in my everyday life. The lifelong memories and friendships that I made during this week have allowed me to grow as a person and expand my horizons in a so many ways. I have even created my first Face Book page because of the requests from my fellow delegates to keep in touch. The United States Senate Youth Program has given me a new perspective on so many issues and has given me the mindset necessary for success in the future. Thank you again, it was truly an honor to have been one of the lucky ones to participate in Washington Week.

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