

Sara Hatlewick, ND – 2016

I truly believe that my week as a United States Youth Program delegate was phenomenal. It was one of the best weeks of my life thus far, and I'm forever grateful for it. Washington Week 2016 filled me with hope for our country in the future leaders that are instilled with patriotism, determination, and hope for the things each one of us believes in.

During Washington Week I learned more about our government than any textbook could ever teach me. It not only taught me the relationships between different groups, but how everyone works together to reach one goal in the end. We covered in a lot and met a lot of different people. From hearing Jeffrey Herbst from the Newseum to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. These people not only changed my view but many others too. Hearing some of our favorite mentors inspired me even more to pursue my dreams where ever they may take me. Not only did they change some of our views but they offered us some advice.

Not only have the speakers left me with a lot of information to soak up, but the monuments and historical places we visited left me in awe. One monument in particular that left me in awe was Arlington National Cemetery. Arlington National Cemetery has always been a location I have wanted to visit and see the wreath laying ceremony because those are the heroes that fought to make our country the way it is. Another event would be dining at the National Archives. Just being in the presence of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence was an amazing experience for everyone who wants to study and explore politics and the government system. Being from a small town in North Dakota the Senate reception was amazing too. Seeing eighty senators interact was the highlight of my trip; also being able to meet and talk to both of my senators.

The entire week I was able to connect with 103 of the brightest young adults who share the same passion for politics as me. We were all able to put aside our differences and have an intelligent conversation about the different political issues. In addition to the delegates, the military mentors were life changing also. They not only guided us through our days but they also became part of my extended family. The mentors give us advice to help us through our days. They will forever be in our memories and hopefully get to see them again someday.

In conclusion, Washington Week was an unforgettable life changing experience. It not only fueled my passion for government but also showed me I am not alone trying to fight the issues we have today. Words cannot describe how grateful I am to have experienced this trip.