

Hannah Zimmerman, NY – 2017

The best measure of my time at the US Senate Youth Program is what my phone looks like now. On it, I have Facebook messages from Christian Parker from Arkansas talking about Methodism, while Bridger Gordon from South Dakota is snap chatting me about Bambi. I check my calendar and I see that I have plans to meet up with Gloria Oladipo when I am in Chicago next month, I have plans to see David Edimo in DC this summer, and that I plans to find Nick LaBelle at the Jersey shore. I see Jakub and I have brunch plans for San Francisco in the fall. I check my camera roll and I find pictures of me and Kathy Min laughing from Idaho from when she visited New York, and pictures of me and Sterling giggling from admit weekend at Stanford. I check to email to find a friendly exchange between myself and Mr. Irish in which he has so generously offered to give me a tour of the Hearst foundation.

I check my Instagram and I see that my military mentor, Captain Appleby has liked and left a kind comment on my Instagram post, and Maia Brockback from Colorado has sent me a direct message asking me about accessing our Stanford email accounts. Wilfried Zibell has tagged me in a socialist meme on GroupMe, and Mason of Montana and I are talking about everything from art to Bernie Sanders and everything in between. I see that I am a part of a community that is bigger my city, and is bigger than my state. I see that I know people of all walks of life and all backgrounds and we have conversed. I see that as much as I try to put on my angry rebel air, I can't help but smile when I think about the United States Senate Youth Program. I think about the hour long conversation I had with Carlos, who works in the Mayflower's kitchen about how much he enjoys seeing the delegates every year. I think about the deep conversations I had with the education representatives from North Dakota, and Mississippi. I think about how they so kindly urged me to visit, to see the buffalo or try some of Mississippi's famed salt-water taffy. I think about how I won several awards from the group—"most rebellious," "most likely to lead a political revolution", "most likely to stage a coup," and I know that I have found a group.

I look through the kind notes in my journal and know that people respect me. And I may not get to Indiana to see Jake or New Hampshire to see Meredith anytime soon, but to have gotten to know them, that was the greatest pleasure of all.