

Jacob Fisher, CO – 2018

The United States Senate Youth Program is magical because you get to participate in something that is unimaginably spectacular. Washington Week was exhilarating, informational, inspiring, and most of all: life-changing. Even now, it is hard for me to sum up all of my thoughts and memories from this special program.

As I walked into the terminal at Dulles Airport I was greeted by a group of Military Mentors and it was in that moment that I knew Washington Week was going to be special. Along with a few other delegates that had arrived with me, we were whisked to the elegant Mayflower Hotel and with that, our week had begun.

My fellow delegates and I had the opportunity to hear from Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch in the Courtroom of the Supreme Court. In addition, since Justice Gorsuch is from my state of Colorado, I had the privilege of meeting Justice Gorsuch in his chambers before he spoke to the rest of us. Justice Gorsuch spoke to us for a brief time and then opened himself up for questions longer than any other speaker, which was insightful and quite memorable.

One of my favorite meals occurred when dining in the Benjamin Franklin State Dining Room at the Department of State. We each got to sit at a table with officials from different areas of the State Department and learn about their time as civil servants as well as how they got to where they were. I learned about the many different ways to impact our world without being an elected politician. It is clear to me that anyone can make a difference in any field if they really put their mind to it.

Another unforgettable aspect of Washington Week was the decorated Military Mentors of each branch that served as guides for the week. They helped to ground me in a week that felt almost too surreal at times. Our Military Mentors showed me what complete dedication to one's country looks like and for that I am forever grateful.

Colorado, like our nation as a whole, is home to people of all different political ideologies and backgrounds. Our two senators, fittingly, come from different parties and don't always agree on every issue. At the Senate Reception, both of my senators arrived around the same time. My senators were cordial to one another and both stayed to chat with my co-delegate and me. This was extremely special for me because it showed me that political disagreement did not justify treating others with disrespect. This interaction helped restore my faith in the possibility of compromise in a time of extreme political polarization.

Without a doubt, the most magnificent part of the United States Senate Youth Program were the other delegates. I truly cannot enumerate how special and outstanding every single delegate was. I learned from them. I laughed with them. And most importantly, I will remember them and stay in touch with them for the rest of my life. With them at the helm, our future is bright.

No writing can really do the United States Senate Youth Program justice. The only way I think anyone can know what Washington Week really feels like is to experience it for themselves. Thank you to everyone who was a part of a week that has changed my life forever.