

Nathaniel Hutton, DC -- 2018

I am a born and raised Washingtonian. I have lived in the District for my entire life, coexisting with the White House, Capitol, and Washington Monument. Yet, despite the presence of these landmarks and edifices, Washingtonians often fail to appreciate and experience the beauty and significance they have to offer. For me, this was the case until I attended the U.S. Senate Youth Program's (USSYP) Washington Week.

During Washington Week, I found the opportunity to rediscover my hometown with 103 other delegates who truly exemplify the promise and potential of our generation. I am proud to call these people my friends with whom I made memories that will last a lifetime. Every single day, I had the pleasure of visiting a new place, hearing from speakers who have truly groundbreaking accomplishments, and eating some *really* good food. While there are many adjectives that could be used to describe Washington Week and the United States Senate Youth Program, I will simply use life-changing.

In conclusion, I want to thank my fellow delegates who helped make my week one of the best of my life; I hope I helped do the same for you. I want to thank all of the outstanding Military Mentors who helped make the week possible -- they are the epitome of public service. I want to thank the speakers who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with and speak to us. But most importantly, I want to thank the Hearst Foundations for sponsoring and funding USSYP. Without them, this program would simply not exist. The implications of that are not lost on me. So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for this incredible program -- I won't forget it anytime soon.