

Isaac Olson, SD – 2018

I first just want to say that this scholarship program is unbelievable. The amount of activities and places you get to go is unreal. You visit so many different buildings and monuments. They have everything scheduled so that they can fit every possible thing they can in a day. The days are long but they are filled with learning and site-seeing. You listen to many speakers and get to ask all of them questions about their topics or whatever you would like to ask.

The things you get to do as part of the trip to Washington, D.C. is a long list but I will give a few of my favorite places. I really enjoyed going to the Pentagon because it was huge and I really enjoy the military. The best part about it was we got to see Secretary of Defense Mattis. Which not many people get to see and we were not even supposed to see him. My next favorite part was going to the White House and touring it and seeing Donald Trump in person. It's not every day that you get to see the president of the United States. I thought we would only be taking a picture with Donald Trump but we also got to take one with Mike Pence and the first lady of the United States. There are many things you get to experience that are not listed on the schedule. Also, seeing a Supreme Court justice was very cool. Neil Gorsuch was very interactive with us and tried his best to answer our questions about the law. What was surprising is that he answered our questions for about an hour and a half which was awesome.

The day might be quite long but it can be relaxing and very exciting and worth it. I would wake up around 6 a.m. every morning to get ready for the day. We would all be down in a dining room and eat breakfast. (We ate every meal together as a group and it usually fancy which was a bonus.) The meals were good and a good variety it was not just the same thing over and over. There was always places to be and places to see. I loved seeing the architecture of Washington, D.C. I started to look at why the town was built how it is and how the buildings were built. We went to George Washington's mansion and saw where he was buried. His mansion overlooked the Potomac River which looked a lot like the Missouri River where I lived and it was just cool to think about. We tended to listen to about 5 different speakers throughout the day and they all were very different. We would end the day around 9 p.m. and would either do homework, visit with the other students there, or go to sleep. I usually visited for a little bit and then went to bed because I was exhausted from the day.

I really recommend applying for the scholarship because the opportunities you get to do are a once-in-a-lifetime experience. You do this all for almost free which makes it even better. They also pay for everything from your flight to hotel rooms to the food you eat. You are in D.C. for a week and receive and \$10,000 scholarship for any college. What else could you ask for from a scholarship? It's almost like a dream while you're there and seeing how the government works and seeing everything they are involved in.