

## **Michael Mischley, MA – 2019**

Receiving the call from my State's Department of Education that I had been selected to represent Massachusetts in the United States Senate Youth Program rocked my world. I had never been to Washington, D.C. before and I really did not know what to expect or how I would feel surrounded by a plethora of different viewpoints and perspectives in the city of politics. However, upon meeting my fellow delegates, making friends was no difficult task. It's amazing to be surrounded by some of the smartest men and women in the country and to have the opportunity to discuss the issues that matter in a clear, calm, and concise manner. Put that dynamic in the setting of the gorgeous Mayflower Hotel, under the watch of insightful Military Mentors, and you'll walk out of that week having made over one hundred new friends that you will have for life. I know I did.

Speaking on the Military Mentors, that aspect of this program was one of my favorites. They were so wonderful all the time and were very excited to share their stories of service and who they are as people with us. Being able to interact with and learn from them definitely made my week more enjoyable and deepened my appreciation for our service members.

For those of you who see eating as one of the finer aspects of life, the food is spectacular. The first meal we ate was a deli spread and assorted sandwich meats and it only goes up from there – I'm talking three course meals every night. My favorite meal of the week was a chicken leg with purple rice and root vegetables followed by a slice of carrot spice cake. Seriously, the food is amazing.

Never in my life did I imagine watching a session of the United States Senate or going into the White House, but this program allowed me to experience things that I might never get to do again in my life. From eating next to the Constitution, to venturing into the State Department, to exploring Capitol Hill, this program presents an unmatched opportunity to see up close the places that our government operates and where our leaders meet. The speakers that we heard from were by far the best part of the program. Whether that be Chief Justice John Roberts, Deputy National Intelligence Director Susan Gordon, or Secretary of the Senate Julie Adams, each speaker was excited to speak with us and answer almost any questions that we had. By serving in their positions, they've gathered much wisdom and advice and I consider it an honor to be privy to and hear their stories. I will always be thankful for that opportunity.

All in all, this program is special and will always occupy a place in my heart and my mind. I am eternally grateful to the Hearst Foundations for allowing this program to exist and for giving me the opportunity to make lifelong friends and experiences.