

Rachel Victorin, RI – 2019

Thank You, United States Senate Youth Program.

The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP). It was anything beyond my expectations. From our stunning photographers, Jakub and Erin making sure our pictures were all set (not to mention that they're both incredibly brilliant and amazing to hold conversations with), to Mr. Cox and his amazing speaking voice informing us of all the basics, and to our Military Mentors, who each had their own story to share and made sure we were always cared for. The experience that I had at USSYP will never leave me as I go on into my life. I was truly able to remain myself through this whole experience. The things I've learned and the people I've met; it has all helped me in some way. This was truly a big learning journey for me and there's no one to thank more than USSYP!

The speakers I enjoyed the most were Brian Kamoie, the Associate Administrator for Mission Support from FEMA, and Susan Gordon, the Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence. They were both very articulate, they spoke clearly and intelligently and they were very personal with the answers that they provided the students who had asked questions. Something that Susan Gordon said that stayed with me was "to matter, is cool." And that very simple line really made me not only think, but feel. It held so much truth to me and I especially loved how she was able to tie in everything she was talking about to her profession. Brian Kamoie seemed very honest and he was very open with almost everything involving his job. They stuck out the most to me and I carried what they said throughout the rest of the week. I enjoyed the museums we visited, getting to visit federal buildings, getting to enter restricted areas like the Supreme Court and also having the privilege and the honor of eating dinner 50 feet from the original Bill of Rights, U.S Constitution and the Declaration of Independence! It all felt so amazing and special, it was so hard to believe that not only were we getting a nice scholarship, but it was also all paid for.

So, what is the impact? What's happens next? Well, I thought it would be very special if the program would be the first to hear. Because of this program, because of USSYP, I've decided that somewhere down the line in my life, I am going to run for United States Senate. It felt like it called out my name. There was no doubt. This program changed my life. I have so much love and admiration for USSYP and all who have helped it come to life every year. I want to give the biggest, heartiest thank you to the Hearst Foundations who year after year put together amazing weeks for delegates in D.C. It was such an honor to be chosen and to represent my state of Rhode Island. I will always be a United States Senate Youth Program Delegate. I am very proud to wear it on me like a badge. I will never forget how this made me feel, how much education was given and how much I've grown as a result.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you, United States Senate Youth Program.

You were too good to me.