

Aina Katsikas, HI - 2015

We.

On Saturday March 7th 2015, I tweeted, "I have serious issues because I just used up all of my 4G data for the month and it's only March 7th." I attribute my excessive 4G data usage to the U.S. Senate Youth Program.

I regret nothing.

The program was such an inimitable experience that I couldn't stop snapchatting, tweeting and texting my time as a delegate. I used up all of my 4G data for the month on the first day of the program because from the second we were picked up at the airport, my two eyes weren't enough to document the experience.

We had dinner in the National Archives Rotunda, more commonly known to delegates as, "date night with the Constitution" while listening to a speech from Senator Johnny Isakson. We met the President of the World Bank Group and had lunch in the Pentagon. We met the President of the United States and were featured on a special segment on C-SPAN. We met Jeh Johnson and the Swedish Ambassador.

One can see how this format is going. Each statement begins with "We" and ends with something ineffably amazing. The concept of "We" was such a small detail, yet I think one of the most critical ones. We experienced incredible moments we thought were unimaginable and held conversations with soul mates we had never met before. We were a team. We held a vehemence for public policy and civil rights. We cared too much about this country to disregard even the most trivial headline. We love bipartisanship too much to ignore an issue without debating it for hours upon end. We were such a self-motivated idiosyncratic bunch that sacrificed sleep for public service.

We all experienced amazing things and we are all indubitably thankful for the Hearst Foundations. As banal as this may sound, the United States Senate Youth Program is nothing shy of a once in a lifetime experience. My 4G data plan agrees.