

Caitlin Lackey, ID - 2015

As I sat down to write my thoughts, feelings, and reflections about my week in Washington, a flood of feelings came rushing back, memories sprang to my mind, and once again I was taken back to the capital of this beautiful country. It can be easily said that this was one of the best, most exciting, definitely unique weeks of my life. I learned so many things about our government, but more importantly I learned about the kind of people in our government.

Receiving the news that I was a delegate started this whole exciting journey, and before I knew it, I was boarding a plane. My week went by very quickly, it all seems a blur now, but there are a few things that will stay clear in my mind. First, was Dr. Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank. Before my trip, I had no idea who or what the World Bank was; however, as Dr. Kim sat down and took our questions, I learned that they are a group who provide aid and assistance to developing countries. I was amazed that so many countries could work together peacefully for the greater good of the world. Often in the media we only hear about the negativity between countries, so it was incredibly refreshing to learn from Dr. Kim.

Perhaps my favorite memory was eating dinner in the rotunda of the National Archives. Not only was the food exquisite, as it was at every meal, but the fact that we, a group of teenagers, were eating dinner fifty feet away from the original Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States was truly a great privilege. All the effort that was put into such an impressive feat amazes me to no end, and I am extremely appreciative of everyone who allowed that to happen.

One highlight of the trip was meeting with our senators and with the President. They gave us so much good advice; just as when President Obama said, "Don't worry about who you want to be, worry about what you want to do." This really struck me because I've always had this image in my head of who I want to be, but never really thought about what I would really do to get there. It was an incredible experience to be able to meet such high level government officials, I'm still in awe over it; however, it wasn't their titles that struck me, it was the way they presented themselves, and spoke about our nation. Each individual seemed so down to earth, and each was passionate about their work. Though they may disagree on how to achieve it, each individual left me with the impression that the true reason they were there was to serve the people, and make the world a better place.

I am incredibly grateful everyone who gave me such a unique and incredible experience that I will cherish throughout my life time. Washington Week opened my eyes to so many new opportunities that I can't wait to explore. It left me with lifelong friends, many who I continue to stay in touch with. I look forward to seeing where all of fellow delegates end up in their lives and how we will all continue to serve. Washington Week was an experience like no other, and one that I wish I could do every year.