

Kristen Tomjack, NE-2015

When I got home from my week spent in Washington, D.C, I was bombarded with questions. I found that I struggled with the words that could sum up my time. I usually just said "My week was amazing! I didn't want to come home." Which was true. But I really wanted to tell my friends and family everything. I just wasn't able to come up with words to explain just how amazing and special my week was.

I did not think that I would be chosen to be a delegate for USSYP. I sent in my application not expecting to hear back. You can imagine my reaction when I did. I opened a thick envelope that told me of my acceptance into the program and I immediately burst into tears. I was shocked, overjoyed, and extremely grateful.

I did not know what to expect of Washington Week, but I was definitely not disappointed. For the first time, I was surrounded by people who were my age and who had the same interests as me. We were all there because of our interest in government and politics.

I will never be able to fully explain the magnitude of Washington Week. Every day was packed with speakers and tours. We heard from just about everyone. Senators, lawyers, journalists, even the president took time out of their busy schedule to share some words of wisdom with us. I was given a glimpse behind the scenes of Washington, D.C.

My week as a delegate was shared with 103 other high school junior and seniors. I will forever cherish the friendships that I made there. I can also now say that I know at least two people from every state.

If anything, Washington Week confirmed my future. My passion for politics and public service only grew during my amazing time. I can not wait for the day that I get to return to Washington, D.C. I owe a lot to the Hearst Foundations, and to USSYP for giving me the amazing opportunity that has changed my life.