

Easton Countryman, WY – 2019

Washington Week was the experience of a lifetime. Prior to attending I had a very limited idea of what the federal government did and how it did it. My knowledge consisted of several years of history classes taught through a bland and non-detailed text book. I have had a deep interest in history and government for years and jumped at the opportunity to learn about the government first hand.

We were able to speak with and question many of the guest speakers. Through their speeches I learned a great deal about the different branches of government from the State Department to the executive branch. I also learned a lot about certain positions within the federal government, such as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Selva gave all of us a great insight into what his duties entail. He provided one of the best explanations of how the different departments of the government work together, providing the example of how he is an advisor to the president for the Department of Defense, and how he works with the Chiefs of Staff to organize the efforts of the Armed Forces.

However, the greatest resources available to the delegates are, by far, the Military Mentors. They made the week fun and exciting. They were able to provide very unique perspectives to the discussions between delegates and answer many of the questions we had, regarding the government and how it functions. They were always willing to help us and truly wanted the best for us. Without them, the week would have been missing a critical piece of the experience. For those of us with military aspirations, the Military Mentors were a great source of knowledge and advice.

Overall, I learned a lot from the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) and Washington Week, that I otherwise would not have. It was an incredible opportunity to be able to connect with America's future leaders. What we learned from our current leaders is invaluable. Undoubtedly, this real-world exposure to the federal government will shape my future and that of my fellow delegates.