

Hollie Rader, HI - 2021

Popular American children's author Dr. Seuss wrote a book titled *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*. The book is about a girl and boy named Kay and Jay, who meet many mind-boggling creatures throughout their adventures. It teaches children about accepting differences, and in a way, I believe the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) did the same for me. Going into Washington Week, I had no clue what to expect. I only had come with the impression that this would be a life-changing program, and it sure was — even if I had to wake up at 3:00 AM. Coming from a first-generation immigrant family and college-goer, my experiences via Washington Week were truly unimaginable, especially to any other day-to-day American citizen. It still feels so surreal to say that I could converse and meet with the people I did and be in the same Zoom as them.

One of my favorite speakers would have had to be Harvard Student Body President Noah Harris. The fact that Noah Harris is still in college but speaks with much candor and conviction is mind-blowing. Whoever placed him last on the agenda knew what they were doing. Having him as the final speaker was a great way to close off Washington Week, and I can rightfully assume my fellow delegates think so. In less than an hour, he taught us countless valuable lessons that one could only hope to learn throughout life. However, **one** lesson that resonated with me was when he quoted Oprah: "you can do everything in life, but you can't do it all at once." Throughout high school, I, too, fell in love with innumerable extracurricular activities. Hence, that statement was a real game-changer in my current mindset, and I will certainly keep that in mind in college and after.

As a person who strives to uphold the philosophy of servant leadership, I was deeply enthralled with Mr. Brian Kamoie's remarks. At the beginning of his portion, he asked us, "what is it you plan to do with your wild, precious life?" and I instantly paid more attention to what he had to say. In response to his question, I thought of an immediate answer, which had piqued and reaffirmed my passion for service. Mr. Kamoie encouraged us to do three action steps: (1) commit to serving, (2) think big, (3) take bold, ethical action. Now with the end of Washington Week, I hope I can do just as he said to help Hawaii, the United States, and the world as a whole. Change starts with only one person, but hopefully, along the way, I will inspire one, **two**, and if not more people like Mr. Kamoie has with the other delegates and me.

Living in Hawaii, there are not many Republicans (**red**); thus, I found it quite interesting to meet Senator James Lankford from Oklahoma. Though he has different values than I do, I was still fascinated by his approach to certain topics. I sincerely appreciate all of his efforts in serving the American people. At one point, a delegate asked him, "what is something you wish the American people knew?" and he said the difference between federal versus state policy. This remark inspired me to further encourage those at home in Hawaii to be more civically engaged!

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial injustices that have and continue to plague our homes, schools, and communities, I was in awe with how well put together virtual Washington Week was. We were definitely "the Zoom where it happened," and in the four corners of my screen in the **blue** Pacific Ocean, I did not just see high school teens, but I saw changemakers and servant leaders who shine so bright and have a passion so suffocating that it drove them to instill change. Our hard work and efforts are truly a reflection and testimony of the great heights our nation will continue to reach and soar to. And, as Dr. Seuss said in *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*: "Today is gone. Today was Fun. Tomorrow is another one." I am grateful to have had the opportunity to cross paths with these remarkable, like-minded individuals, and I am ecstatic to see all the incredible heights delegates will reach in the near future.