

Julian Ober, OK - 2021

My experience in the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) was incredible. We heard from leaders in top agencies and positions in five different sectors of our government. We heard from the president, a Supreme Court justice, senators, Dr. Fauci and leaders of the National Institutes of Health, and Norah O'Donnell from CBS Evening News. I got the inside scoop on Washington and insights into the intricacies of keeping our democracy afloat. Hearing from influential people in our government and high-ranking officials was something I likely will never get the chance to do again.

Senator Tammy Baldwin taught us to be bold and courageous as trailblazers. Senate Historian Betty Koed taught us about the importance of our history as a Congress. Dr. Collins and Dr. Fauci talked to us about the nation's most pressing and relevant issue right now which is the pandemic. It was wonderful to get honest and open insight into the intricacies of our government. I also got to know people from every state in the country which was possibly the most invaluable part because I was in a room full of future leaders who are passionate in the same way I am. I undoubtedly made life-long friends and connections this week and that may be the most important takeaway from this week.

Thank you to Mrs. Eldridge for nominating me for this position. And lastly thank you to my Military Mentor group for being the most fun, kind, compassionate, and unique group of people. Monday night, my military mentor group stayed on the call for hours sharing vulnerable stories and it was a time where I really got to know my fellow delegates. It was indescribable. We connected and shared laughs and thoughts in such an open way. No doubt that was my favorite part. I cherish each and everyone in my group and all of my "delegates and distinguished guests." I'll see you in Washington eventually!