

Quinten Carney, ID – 2022

I cannot describe how thankful I am for the United States Senate Youth Program. It provided me with an amazing opportunity to engage with my fellow delegates and our federal government in ways I never imagined. Even though Washington Week was online, I left more inspired and motivated by the positive possibilities of government.

I appreciated all of the speakers who donated their time to this year's program. I learned something from all of them. However, I'm especially appreciative of former Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy and FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel.

I had the privilege of asking Justice Kennedy the first question. I appreciated Justice Kennedy's conversation with us as it shed more light on the judicial branch, the branch I'm the least familiar with. The issue of free speech is especially important and politicized in today's society, I was amazed when the Justice discussed *Texas v Johnson* and its landmark effect on the freedom of expression. His insight into what items and symbols are and should be protected by the first amendment will last me for the rest of my lifetime. Lastly, I really enjoyed hearing the Justice mention his favorite court cases were the ones that are highly technical and complex. I appreciate knowing the lengthy deliberations that went into those decisions.

Another opportunity that left a lasting impact from Washington Week was getting to hear from FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel. I had the opportunity to ask her about the FCC's efforts to fight robocalls. I'm grateful to know that the FCC is making real efforts to prevent robocalls and other scam opportunities. Seeing real policy decisions play out in my life faith in our institutions and government.

Additionally, I am incredibly grateful to my military mentor Major Matthew Pellegrine and my fellow delegates. Major Pellegrine is a truly amazing person who helped me and the other delegates get the most from Washington Week. He was an incredibly kind and insightful mentor. I remember him checking on me after a Zoom presentation where I hunched over often. I had been frantically writing notes. However, I appreciate his concern for my personal health. He earned the title of my "mentor for life" after my short time with him. My fellow delegates are amazing people and I fully expect them to go on and make a great impact in this world. They opened my eyes to the world beyond Idaho and my small experiences. I will never forget our closing Zoom sessions every day where I learned their perspective and connect with them.

Finally, I want to state my appreciation for everyone who made this year's Washington Week possible. The United States Senate Youth Program has lasted sixty years and through this short week, I can see its impact on the world around me. It's been a phenomenal experience and I will never forget it. I'm grateful to the Hearst Foundations, Mr. Steve Cox, Ms. Rayne Guilford, the Idaho Department of Education, and many others for helping to organize this year's activities. To everyone from my friends, teachers, and family thank you for helping me get to this point. It's a once-in-life opportunity I'll never forget.