

Pranav Palaniappan, MO – 2022

Pineapples on pizza.

The United States Senate Youth Program selects delegates to represent their respective states but on a larger note, to also represent their nation. Some of the most distinguished students in the nation were torn apart by the simple concept of a savory delicacy on a cheap-but-delicious cuisine. Each delegate had unique passions. Heavy advocacy behind every issue shed a light on the future of our nation: promising. But how could such promising students be unsuccessful in compromising on such a facile topic? Passion. Not every delegate spoke on this heavily debated topic: this wasn't their cup of tea. However, I'm here to talk about the ones who did. Students were enthralled by the like-minded individuals who were able to bolster debates and heated conversations. The science behind pineapples, the culinary aspects of this combination, and food science experiments were thrown around the groupchat: notifications bombarded my phone. Safe to say, a conclusion was not established with our group being just as divided. However, an overarching conclusion did come to light. Each delegate was so passionate about what they stood for and their ideologies. No one backed down for what they believed in and fought like they would for any other topic.

The Watje Warriors assembled in their headquarters: ZOOM meeting with passcode 155550. Each delegate was so different. Different states, different beliefs, different ethnicities—the only thing we had in common was our muted buttons all turned on. Slowly, Captain Watje cracked through the ice; each delegate slowly showcasing their unique characteristics, achievements, and identities. Every beginning and end to the USSYP sessions was a barrage of jokes, stories, and conversations. By the end of Washington Week, the Watje Warriors were confident in keeping society safe and inequality off the streets.

In conclusion, Washington Week was a memorable experience. It may seem like a generic statement. However, bonding over speakers, videos, and topics created a vast amount of knowledge which has simply been embedded within my memory (clearly memorable). It has been an honor to be able to represent my state and country within this prestigious program and I will forever be indebted to the United States Senate Youth Program. I hope to make us proud.