

Hadia Choudhary, AR – 2023

Unimaginable. If I had to say it in one word, that's what I would say. From the people, the memories, the food, the events, the speakers, the hotel, the friends, the family, the laughter, the tears, the sleepless nights, and the flights, truly: unimaginable. I can't truly recap everything because my mind is so tangled with overwhelming thoughts of the number of experiences that I shared here. Absolutely unimaginable.

Getting off of an airplane and being automatically greeted by signs and very professional people was quite surreal in and of itself. I was guided to where my bag was and escorted to some seats, where two other delegates were seated. I sat down and we were all immersed in conversation within seconds, and soon realized that this was going to be a wonderful experience no matter what happened.

Day after day, Washington Week was filled with beautiful views, surprises, and moments that are unforgettable. The first day started off with us meeting an alumna, who also happened to be the first ever female Muslim student body president of any Ivy League college. Day after day, we met more and more people, each person being unique and eloquent. We went to monuments ranging from Lincoln Memorial to Mount Vernon, and everything in between.

I especially enjoyed visiting the National Archives and seeing the original Constitution. We also had the honor of eating dinner in the same room as that document, which was completely surreal. Another location that I will never forget is the Supreme Court. Going into the building I knew that there would not be any pictures to look back on; this led me to being completely present in the moment and realizing how rare of an experience I was having. Speakers that stood out to me were Senator John Hickenlooper and Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. The senator was an extremely genuine and humorous person, and the justice shared words that left a mark on all of the delegates.

I could write about Washington Week forever. I have documented my memories in videos, pictures, and voice memos. It was a beautiful journey with an emotional ending, but the ending was not truly an end. I know and hope that the delegates I met, the connections I made, and the memories I hold dear will stay connected and with me forever. I know that one day, somewhere along the way, I will see these people again, and I cannot wait until then. All of these brilliant young individuals have inspired me to never lower my expectations, divert my journey to a path of ease, and to most importantly, never be a bystander that gets hit by the bus.