

Madison Hahn, SC – 2023

At the conclusion of Washington Week, I was asked to describe my experience with a singular word. This singular word had to encapsulate my excitement, intrigue, gratitude, and exhaustion. I have since determined this word does not in fact exist. Despite the limited lexicon that the dictionary could offer, I landed on the word “transformative.”

To be transformative in this sense could be synonymous to revolutionary: an event which shapes a generation. While this seems like a crude exaggeration, I see this descriptor as incredibly fitting. Washington Week is a totally unique experience, where 104 of the brightest young minds, the future of our nation, and the trailblazers of our generation, come to meet.

Each delegate brought a new, exciting, and enthralling story to the table. This diverse bunch, however, was always united in one thing: change. This was evident throughout my time in Washington. No matter what state they came from, what background they had, or what values they held, all 104 delegates in attendance held an intense passion for the improvement of our nation. This gives me hope.

In a world of political tension and global disagreement, I see hope. I see people who care enough to change. I see students who are capable and willing to take a stand. And most importantly, I see delegates who are eager with good hearts and sharp minds. I see our leaders. This is where I see transformation. While this group is the embodiment of the transformation of our nation, I can speak for all delegates when I say that Washington Week was a transformative experience in our lifetime. In all aspects from meals to meetings, there is no experience that could shape a person quite like Washington Week. The diversity of locations, speakers, and activities have opened our eyes to how wide the scope of our government truly is. It has shown us all what has been done and what can be done and further inspired us all to take the torch.

While the week is in fact and exhausting and the 15-hour days are intensive, every drop of coffee and early morning was worth it. Our group was time and time again reinvigorated as we heard from our nation’s most prominent leaders. This group of students were nothing short of extraordinary and the itinerary we experienced was surreal. Washington Week was a transformative experience for all delegates who participated, and all delegates who participated will be transformative for our nation. I am forever honored to be a part of such an outstanding and life-changing program.