

United States Senate Youth Program Reflection

Where do I even begin, what a week it was. I feel the immense pressure to encapsulate the amazingness of the week perfectly. The U.S. Senate Youth Program (USSYP) was an unforgettable experience that left me in awe and changed my perspectives on current issues. Being surrounded by talented young leaders who, like me, were driven by a passion for change and a desire to make change, was a surreal experience. Additionally, engaging with prominent political figures and policymakers was invaluable.

As someone deeply passionate about civic engagement but apprehensive about the unfamiliar terrain, I boarded my dad's car with anticipation and trepidation. Little did I know that this experience would profoundly transform my life.

Among the myriad of moments that defined this extraordinary experience, one stands out with vivid clarity—the bond formed with my Military Mentor group. Meeting these individuals was awe-inspiring and humbling as someone who grew up with a deep respect for the men and women in uniform. Their stories of sacrifice and service resonated deeply with me, instilling within me a profound sense of admiration and gratitude. The heartfelt conversations with my military mentor group, my initial nervousness melted away, and made me feel like family.

Another key moment was meeting President Biden after the State of the Union address was a surreal experience, as I was struck by his warmth and willingness to engage with us, despite the demands of leading the country. He spoke with us about the importance of public service and the impact that young people can have on shaping the future. I was also impressed by his sense of humor and ability to connect with us on a personal level I stood face-to-face with the leader of our nation, and I couldn't help but marvel at the journey that had brought me to this point. Additionally, we had the opportunity to meet Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, who shared her insights on the role of the judiciary and the importance of critical thinking in the legal system. Her intellect and passion for the law were truly inspiring and fueled my passion to pursue a future career in public service.

The most memorable memory for me was watching the State of the Union address from the White House. It was an electrifying experience. As I sat in my seat, watching the members of Congress, Cabinet members, and other dignitaries, I felt the weight of history and the significance of the moment. I was struck by the president's ability to balance the need to inspire and motivate the nation with the need to address the complex challenges facing the country. The atmosphere in the room was electric, with moments of applause and my peer's cheers punctuating the speech.

As I reflect on my experience, I realize that I have gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of governance and the importance of collaboration and compromise. I was struck by the dedication and passion of the leaders I met, who were united in their commitment to serving the country despite their differences. I left with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to making a difference in my community, inspired by the examples of the leaders I had met. In the words of Elena Keagan "Bye Now."