

This past March, I had the great fortune to attend USSYP's Washington Week 2009. When asked to write an essay reflecting on the trip of a lifetime, where do I start? I had the pleasure of traveling and spending seven days with 104 of the best and brightest students in America. I was able to see and hear lawmakers and public servants of the highest rank. I saw monuments and memorials, displays and decorations. I was treated to some of the best cuisine of my life for every meal. I had the opportunity to listen and meet the President of the United States at the White House!

But these are just the things that I did; I would like to write more about the people I met. The Hearst Foundation and the USSYP staff did an amazing job of bringing in the top students in the nation. The discussions and debates we had were at a completely different level than high school, and the caliber of character of my fellow delegates was outstanding. The seventeen Military Mentors were great, and it was an honor getting to meet and know men and women who have put everything on the line to serve our country.

The entire week was beautifully orchestrated and I cannot thank the Hearst Foundation and the USSYP staff enough for making this possible for me. The week solidified my desire to eventually make it back to Washington D.C. as a policymaker. My week as a USSYP delegate has changed my life and I will be forever grateful for this experience; it was the trip of a lifetime.

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