

In a single word, Washington Week was spectacular. Even though I have been to Washington, DC before, the United States Senate Youth Program and the Hearst Foundation presented an experience that will undoubtedly be one of the most memorable experiences of my life. From the moment we landed in Dulles International Airport, I knew I was in for the week of my life as a friendly member of the Washington Week staff greeted me.

Though I arrived earlier than, most of the delegation, the DoDEA delegates had already arrived. My fellow Hawaii delegate and I along with one of the Alaskan delegates sat down with the DoDEA delegates for our first breakfast of the trip. After five minutes into the breakfast, it is safe to consider that I received a preview of the week to follow. The other delegates were some of the friendliest and most well informed people I have ever met.

All of the speakers, tours, and sights were truly incredible. I was able to go places and see things that I could only dream about until this trip. However in my wildest dreams, I never dreamt that I would get to shake the president's hand, let alone the first African American president in history's hand. Almost every single day of that week I lay in my hotel room bed to reflect on the events of the day. And almost every single time I did, I had to ask myself if everything really happened.

I feel that my week in Washington is something that has had a profound impact on me, and will for the rest of my life. Even writing this essay brings back memories and experiences that I feel have focused me on what I would like to do with my life. I would like to be able to make a difference in people's lives, just like how everyone that I met during that week has or will in the future.

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