

Convinced Now?

For many years, I was not convinced. I had been fed the idea since childhood that democracy was the ideal form of government, the most effective, the most representative. After having lived in third world countries for three years, however, I saw the abuse and the tyranny that democracy fostered in those countries, and doubted the power of democracy in my own.

I applied for the program in search of an answer to my pending question. I researched my government as I never had before, read every article I could lay my hands on about current politics and issues. I was determined to arrive in Washington as informed and educated as possible, in order to embark on the journey.

Meeting my senators, President Barack Obama, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, and Judge Robert Henry, all challenged the mindset I arrived with. Having come with frustrations and doubts about my government, finally being able to experience it firsthand caught my attention. As Judge Henry talked to us about law and justice, I began to understand the deliberation and thought poured into our government, and appreciate it for what it is. Throughout the course of the week, being immersed in politics and discussions and news, I noticed my attitude changing.

Yes, there are frustrations running wildy about the country. Yes, there are those whose pessimistic outlook stains the country. Yes, there are the petty disagreements and the disregard for important issues. But, after this week, I found myself clinging on to a sliver of hope. A hope defined by my fellow delegates. I saw educated, high-velocity students who already are making an impact in our world. I saw excitement and vitality in my fellow delegates as they met important political figures of our time. Seeing them inspired and ready for action renewed my lost hope for our representative democracy. I saw the future of the United States of America, and am now confident in saying that the United States will have a lot to offer the world in the next generation. My hope and confidence in democracy has been renewed.

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