

Krysta Bailey - MT - 2011

The United States Senate Youth Program was a terrific experience. One of the past participants from my school, Tyler Dugger, told me it would be the greatest week of my life but I did not realize how sincere he was until I arrived in Washington, D.C. We were given such an incredible opportunity with all the places we were able to see and all the inspiring people who took time out of their busy schedule to come talk to us and personally answer our questions. On the day that President Obama talked to us, I was happier than I could have ever imagined and I felt extremely privileged and honored to be selected for this esteemed group.

Besides all that we learned and saw, one of the greatest aspects of the trip was spending time with such a wonderful peer group. Back at home, people think I'm rather strange for being so interested in politics and being more excited for a presidential debate than a football game. However, I did not feel out of place with all the other delegates, even though we came from completely different regions all over the country. Most of these people had similar aspirations and a similar sense of responsibility relating to both school and involvement in our individual communities. While it was true that we all shared a wide variety of different ideologies, we were able to set our opinions aside and simply enjoy each other's company while having a lot of fun. Perhaps it would be a good idea for all members of Congress to have a bipartisan dance party every now and then.

Overall, this experience has definitely increased my interest in government, especially the judicial branch. I was very excited to visit the Supreme Court building and speak with such esteemed judges as Former Judge Robert Henry and Justice Clarence Thomas. They were very knowledgeable and intimidating men but at the same time kind and much more personable than I had imagined. I know I would love to be a clerk for a judge someday and maybe even an actual judge. Something important that I gained from this experience is that all of these powerful figures were once ordinary people like me and the rest of the delegates, but they had the inspiration and determination to accomplish their goals and accept such important responsibilities. I hope to follow their example.