

Joyce Kim -TX - 2011

Considering I'm not one for hyperboles, I can honestly say that Washington Week was irrefutably one of the best weeks of my life, ever.

On the first day, I met Mr. John Blakely, one of the founders of the USSYP Alumni Association. He told me "Be proud. There are only about 5,000 of us. When there are times in which you are down, remember that you are a member of this incredible organization".

Mr. Blakely's words were solidified by the remainder of the surreal week, including the speakers and the events.

Having a profound interest in international relations and the promotion of universal human rights, one of the speakers that most impacted me was the Undersecretary of Democracy and Global Affairs, Maria Otero. Her graceful manner and her powerful words delivered an inspiring message: "Peace and prosperity are contingent on protecting and empowering individuals—including the world's most vulnerable populations" and outlined the reasoning behind America's foreign policy at its core.

Other invaluable experiences include the collective sense of star-struck excitement upon hearing President Obama's footsteps in the White House corridor, the candid nature of Justice Clarence Thomas, the opportunity to connect with 103 other outstanding delegates, and of course, the many standing ovations for Mrs. Jeannie Irish.

I am humbled to have been able to attend Washington Week and am so proud to be a part of this *incredible* organization.