

USSYP Delegate Essay

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As my flight ascended into Huntsville, I admired the beauty of my home state outside the window. The mighty Tennessee River flows beneath me, and the rolling foothills of Appalachia invite me home. After being picked up at the airport, my parents inquired about my seven days in our nation's capital. I was speechless. The enormity of the week I had just experienced was overwhelming. Full of inspiration, empowerment, history, and politics; the United States Senate Youth Program provided enough memories and lessons to last a lifetime. From a question and answer session with Justice Clarence Thomas, to lunch with a senior State Department official, my USSYP experience was awe-inspiring.

The event I enjoyed the most was the annual USSYP Senate Reception. Both my senators Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, visited with me and John Clark. We had extensive conversations about our week and what our future plans were. Senators Shelby and Sessions motivated us to continue to pursue our dreams and help to improve our state everyday. I left the Kennedy Caucus Room knowing my senators were serving our state with honesty, integrity, and Alabama values. While meeting famous politicians and well-known public servants was a remarkable experience, I found that the friendships formed with other delegates was particularly fulfilling. My small group at USSYP was composed of young men from across the country, from the islands of Hawaii to the hills of Alabama. However, we shared a common appreciation for public service and a love of country that no border could divide.

Washington Week gave me a real perspective on my generation and my place in it. I will forever owe a debt of gratitude to the Hearst Foundation for the opportunities granted to me. Beyond the friendships, memories, and educational lessons I experienced in Washington, USSYP sparked a heartfelt passion for my country that lives deep within each American. As my generation's journey to power forges on, I pray others will process the same passion for America that USSYP gave me.