

HEP/CAMP National Internship Program Week 2
Noel Lopez-Gomez
CSU Sacramento

As I walked to my office on Monday, I am curious to see how my first day will go. I am glad I do not have to use the metro to get to my office since it is a short walking distance. Walking up the steps of the Human Rights Campaign office, I am ready to start my day at the United Farm Workers. Sam, an intern coordinator, gave me a tour of the floor and showed me to my office. The other staff members were welcoming and said they were glad another intern was there to help with the workload.

As I get comfortable in my own office 15 minutes after 9, one of the staff members, Patricia, gives me 3 assignments and asks that I complete them before I go. I was not sure what to do because it was related to nutrition. So I go ask my best friend, Google, for help. I was able to read on the Farm Bill and understand what will take in effect after it is passed. Halfway done, Irene invites me to a briefing on Capitol Hill. Now off to an adventure to Capitol Hill!

Capitol Hill is a relaxing scenery, the squirrels run around and birds sing in the early afternoon. However, the walk into the Capitol Hill building is not relaxing at all. People are running around offices and coffee spills are all over the floor. We arrive to the briefing on International Nash Day, a silent liver disease, which mainly affects Hispanic men.



Many interns were at the briefing, but I think they were more interested of the food rather than the briefing itself. Irene told me that many interns are sent to briefings that provide food and it is considered their lunch. I think that it is crazy for interns to be working constantly.

Going back to the office, the other interns, Nathan and Grace, told me about the do's and don'ts in the office. They told me funny stories of staff members and gave me tips on how to get on a staff members' good sides. When we get to the office, we arrive for a birthday party. Justin, the legislative assistant informed me that "birthdays are taken very seriously in this office." We eat cake and ice cream and celebrate Patricia's birthday. Everyone brought presents for Patricia, and I was unaware so I finished the assignments and gave them to her as a birthday present.

My first day as an intern is done now, so I go back home and relax for the rest of the day.

I start off my second day with a conference call with many organizations that are in support of the Fairness for Farm Workers Act: the UFW, Farm Worker Justice, NAACP, and a few more. I get more information on the bill and I am ready to help pass this bill! Justin suggested I make phone calls to Congressional Offices and encourage them to co-sponsor the bill. I called 40 offices that day. During many of them I would talk to interns, however I was able

to talk to a couple staff members and Justin told me that speaking to staff members in Congressional offices is a good thing.

The next day I called 200 congressional offices and towards the end I memorized the entire script when talking on the phone.

On Wednesday, after work Irene and I went to Capitol Hill. She was attending an Asian/Pacific Islander Congressional Dinner and I was attending the Tri-Caucus Reception at the Library of Congress. We were able to network with other interns from the Congressional Black Caucus and the Asian Pacific American Caucus. We heard speeches from Representatives, Ted Lieu of CA and Representative Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas. They talked to us about taking advantage of this internship and pushing our foot through the door to get where we want to be. Representative Lee discussed the new policy that is separating immigrant families. She told us that Congress Members were at a protest against this new policy. Policies like these, that negatively impact families is why I want to be a policymaker. I want to bring America through unity not separation. Representative Lee's speech made me tear up because I can relate to the pain of family separation. The other interns and I were glad to have met her. As we were leaving the reception, I thanked her for bringing up an important issue and she told me to "Stay Woke."



On Thursday, a couple of interns and I attended the Congressional Baseball game and saw the Republicans lose to the Democrats 6-0. I had fun watching Congress members falling around and throwing balls in opposite directions. The Republican team were always upset, we could see them argue with each other. One of my friends jokingly said that they act like that in the office as well.

On Friday, we began our Public Policy course at George Washington University. We learned about the basics of government then went to the Mexican Cultural Institute and I enjoyed the murals all over the walls. They displayed the important parts of Mexican history.

On Saturday, 13 of the interns went to the beach in Maryland. Three of us went on an adventure to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park and saw many animals. After, we took a 45 minute train ride to Olive Garden, which was just outside the District of Columbia

in Maryland.

Sunday was a relaxing day. A couple of us went out to brunch and then went shopping. I had lots of fun, but my bank account wasn't very happy. This week was packed with amazing experiences and I enjoyed the memories I have made. I am ready for the next 7 weeks.