

HEP/CAMP National Internship Program Week 3
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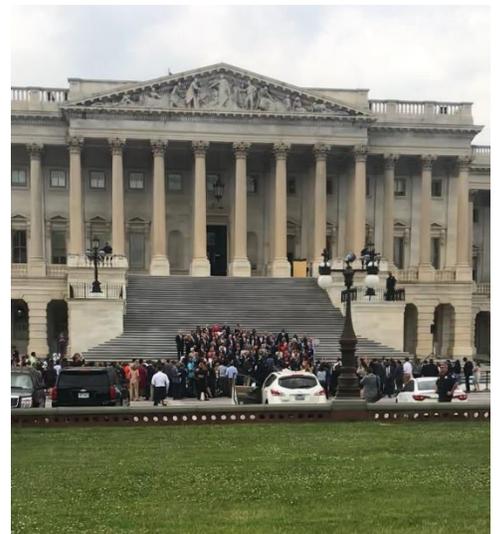
On Monday, like so many others each week, I did not want to get out of bed. I just wanted to stay there and sleep a little longer. However, I knew I had to contact additional congressional offices and encourage them to co-sponsor the Fairness for Farmworkers bill that I am working on. During lunch, we had a staff meeting (free food which I enjoy), and we discussed the issues we were working on.

Monday and Tuesday were relaxing work days with constant phone calls and emails to offices. On occasion, some offices would hang up the phone on me instead of transferring the call, so I could discuss the bill with staff.

On Wednesday, Giev Kashkooli who is the political and legislative director for the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) asked that I attend a press conference on his behalf -the Keeping Families Together Act -Press Conference (Capitol Hill isn't known for short names). I was excited because I stand with Rep. Nancy Pelosi and other members of Congress who support the Keeping Families Together Act. Navigating around Capitol Hill is hard because it is still new to me. Unfortunately, Patrick was not there to guide me, so I did what any other person would do. I wandered around for half an hour hoping to find Rep. Pelosi's office. I found the Longworth cafeteria and decided to take a break. Luckily, I saw several CHCI interns and asked them where to go. They were very helpful and took me to Rep. Pelosi's office.

When I arrived at her office, I saw Congresswomen Pelosi and Napolitano and Congressmen Panetta, and Gutierrez. I thought they were staffers at first, but they proudly wore their congressional pins. One staff member asked why I was there, and I told them that I was an intern with the UFW and that I was asked to represent the UFW at the press conference. Unfortunately, I was told that because I was an intern, I would have to watch the press briefing in the crowd and not with the members of Congress. I felt a bit discriminated against since I was working on the bill as well. Of well, Dennis Gonzalez who is the director of programming for CHCI, once said, "If all interns were to quit one night, D.C. would fall to the ground." I was a little upset as I walked out of the office and saw the members of Congress leaving to start the press conference, but I did stand in the crowd and watch the press conference in full support of the bill.

Thursday was a smooth day at work: I made more calls, got more sponsors, and then went to a briefing. I enjoy going to the briefings because I am able to connect with the two other interns who work in the NVG office. The briefing was about the 80th anniversary of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). After the briefing, I went back to the office for a dinner with Lisa Ramirez, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and the other CAMP interns. She talked about her past experiences and



gave us useful advice to carry on throughout our internship. I was glad to have met her and hope we can have another pizza dinner.

On Friday, we were able to learn about the basic workings of government, which was very useful because some people forget what the role of government is. After class, we meet with Domenika Lynch, CEO of CHCI. She shared her struggles and accomplishments and how she became a CEO.

This weekend was filled with relaxation, work, and sleep. I work at



Starbucks in Sacramento, so to keep my position back home; I need to work 4 hours a week in DC. I worked Saturday because I had no plans. My manager asked if I could work at another store for a while and I agreed because more money wouldn't hurt. I checked with my friends if there was any plans for the day and they all said sleeping was in their plans. My friends who work on Capitol Hill have a huge workload, so I understand why they would want to rest for the day. I did not rest at all. By the end of the day, I worked 13 hours at Starbucks because two people quit and no one else was able to help. I did not mind it because I made a lot of money and this job helps me work in a fast-paced environment, dealing with people, and work under pressure. Starbucks is like Capitol Hill, except Starbucks gets things done faster!

On Sunday, I learned how to flip a tortilla with my hand!! I am not ashamed to say that I was not able to flip a tortilla with my fingers, until today. I always used a fork or a spatula. My mom would always tell me "*el día que estaré más orgullosa de ti es cuando volteas una tortilla con tus manos,*" the day I will be most proud of you is when you flip a tortilla with your hands. My mom set different goals for me, and today I accomplished one of those goals. I was making quesadillas because I am not Gordon Ramsey so I do not know how to cook fancy meals. I put a tortilla in the pan, and I looked for a fork but couldn't find one. I smelled my tortilla burning, so I quickly turned it with my hands. The feeling I had when I flipped the tortilla was like the feeling of seeing \$12.53 in your bank account, very happy. In the end, I ate burned quesadillas.

I was able to meet many new people this week and hope to meet many more in the upcoming weeks. Setting goals, reaching those goals and making connections are several reasons I wanted to intern in DC. I am very glad that I am doing that.