

Week 5

First off, I would like to state that I was taken back a little when titling my journal. WEEK 5. Time does not slow down! Ironically, this week on the Hill slowed down. There is a shift in the atmosphere when Congress is off session. The pace, mood, and people reflect the status of the congressional calendar. Don't get me wrong, there is always work to be done. I had the opportunity to continue batching mail, work with a legislative staffer on circulating of bill, draft constituent letters, and attend to the constituent phone calls as they would tickle in throughout the week. Like the change on Capitol Hill, I also felt the city's swing and anticipation for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Independence Day was like a smoothie for me. Emotions were blended together formulating an overall picture of a girl that pondered; I was lost in thought. How could I be celebrating independence in a time of oppression? Oppression that is taking the place of our past progression. How is it that millions of people gather together and create unity for a celebration? Yet, one can find empty streets in times of need or crisis. Nevertheless, fireworks are still beautiful. Just like fireworks, may we brighten the dark days with light. Light that resembles hope and change. It is time for me and others to trade the *wanting* of change for *action*.

Future generations stand on the shoulders of giants. These giants created the foundation we need to stand up and fight back. I learned more about what it really means to take action and make a difference this weekend. I had the amazing opportunity to end the week at the Unidos US 2018 Annual Conference. Unidos US, originally named NCLR, is an umbrella organization for the Latinx community. Shell was able to invite eight CAMP/CHCI Interns to the conference. I was lucky enough to be one of the eight. This experience was breathtaking. I was surrounded by Latinx Champions, from Latinx CEO's to profound authors and activists. I was able to learn from phenomenal individuals who look like me and have encountered the same trials I have. The struggles of identity, racism, and the fight toward equality were discussed. I felt so empowered simply by observing and listening to these individuals that advocate, analyze, and fight for our community. I will forever be grateful for this experience, it is engraved in my mind. I am Latina, I am here, and I am proud. UNIDOS ESTAMOS!

