

Wendy Cueto

Week 4 Journal

This week I began my internship at Congressman Anthony Gonzalez's office. I was able to meet the rest of the staff as well as the other three interns at the office. My duties began with observing the morning routine, learning phone call procedures, and shadowing Capitol tours. As the week progressed, my supervisor assigned me the responsibility of completing the information binders for the congressman's hearings. He explained that this was a way to gain insight into what issues the office is focusing on right now in addition to the memos I would have to write in the future. I quickly learned how to effectively manage all the paperwork, and I was pleased to have an opportunity to apply my organization skills.

Thursday was the most exciting weekday. It began with an insightful meeting with the United Farm Workers over breakfast. I had the pleasure to meet the president, Teresa Romero, and share my story as a migrant farmworker that traveled from Texas to Michigan. Shortly after, we were informed that all of the CAMP interns were scheduled to share our stories to a room full of executives that are in charge of overlooking legislation for farmworker rights. This is an opportunity to show what farmworkers can create and to prove that we are not just numbers, we are real people with stories and a future. We each shared our families' struggles, sacrifices, and hard work that motivated us to attain a higher education. Some company leaders were receptive, and some were not, but we made our presence known either way. This experience was extremely empowering to me because we learned that our stories hold power and our presence here does too.

After the meeting with the UFW, I went back to the office where I had the opportunity to give my first official tour of the U.S. Capitol. Just like the rest of the city, I had to become familiar with the underground tunnels and the Capitol building. I was happy to have guided such a great family that was impressed by the facts I provided (unknowing of my short experience). My supervisor was pleased and provided me with another independent opportunity to attend a hearing next week. For the hearing, I will be responsible for composing a memo for the office. I am excited to see how much I will grow and become more confident in myself and my abilities.

On Friday, I had the opportunity to tour the Mexican Cultural Institute and learn about their work. The institute allowed me to learn about the Mexican Embassy's role and its services and the issues they focus on. Afterwards, all Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute interns learned and discussed opportunities in foreign affairs and the research programs that can guide a career in foreign affairs.

Overall, I am learning something new each day. The work is tiring, but worth it. I have taken advantage of the weekends to explore and disconnect from the political climate that surrounds the office. This weekend I was able to visit the National Portrait Gallery. I also visited Chinatown where I experienced dumplings for the first time. Lastly, I joined Rosa, an intern at the Office of Migrant Education, for a barbeque at her supervisor's house. It was a relaxing closing to an eventful week.

