

Wendy Cueto

Week 5 Journal

This week, I can definitely say that I am becoming accustomed to the fast-paced city life. I find myself waking up bright and early, eager to learn from the new day. I am pleased that at the end of each day our office's Legislative Director asks me what I learned that day, for which I always have an answer. By having to reflect on my daily learning this practice assures that I am extracting the most from this experience on the hill.

This week the office has been quite busy. On Tuesday I had two hearings to attend. One regarding trade with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the other for Nature-based Resilience for Gulf Coast Communities. The first hearing changed room location last minute, so without realizing it I found myself at a State and Local Taxes hearing which was interesting. I had the opportunity to witness local government officials come to the capital and provide their testimonies about how the SALT tax cap affected their local communities. This was my first hearing and I was able to observe the parliamentary procedure in action. As part of my responsibility for attending each hearing, I was required to write memos for the office that summarized each hearing. This is exciting because it is a way to prove my skills to the office. I am also grateful for these tasks because other interns who have been working at the office longer than I have, have only been assigned to work answering phones and covering the front desk.

On Wednesday I continued to work through bizarre constituent calls which made it a busy day at work. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute hosted a Hill Day which allows high school students from across the nation to tour the city. I was able to join a group from Arizona for lunch and introduced myself as a resource. They all seemed very goal-oriented and were happy to have the chance to explore the capitol. Due to my short time here, I was not assigned a group of my own, but from this week's experience shadowing a group leader, I will be able to lead my first group in July. I am looking forward to that. After lunch with the students, I went back to the office where I received a t-shirt, baseball cards, and a ticket to attend the Congressional baseball game. My boss, Rep. Anthony Gonzalez, was playing centerfield so my office was very busy with excitement all day. Attending the game was a new experience because 1) It was my first time at a professional baseball stadium and 2) I was in the Republican section of the stadium rooting for my congressman. The divide between Democrats and Republicans ceased when two female Dem. players came up to bat and had the support of all the fans. I was happy to get to experience this and to be able to spend time with my coworker outside of work.

On Thursday, I gave two Capitol tours back to back. The first was for a very lovely family who are friends with our Communications staffer. The family was from Michigan and brought their two grandsons who both were recent high school graduates. One of them is planning to attend Michigan State University (Go Green!) and the other the University of Michigan in the fall. The family was a delight to be with. I offered to be a resource for the new Spartan in the fall. The next tour was for a long-time friend of Congressman Gonzalez, Mr. McCarthy. He was very intrigued with my life. I shared that I was a student at Michigan State University and that I was a participant of the College Assistance Migrant Program. I shared about my life as a migrant

farmworker and the wonderful opportunity that I was provided to study at MSU because of CAMP. He shared that he is a school board member at the school that he graduated from and was classmates with Rep. Anthony Gonzalez and Brian Hoyer. We finished the tour and I learned that he was familiar with my hometown, Pharr, TX. He gave me his business card, but I was unable to give him mine because I left them in the office. I had planned to email him later that day but before I could I was surprised when I received an email from Mr. McCarthy first. He thanked me for a great tour and wished me well at MSU and with my family. Congressman Gonzalez was copied in the email so when the Congressman arrived at the office he approached me to personally thank me for the great tour I gave his friend. Both of my tours were rated highly with very good comments which makes me realize that I should not doubt myself. The feedback provided has helped me become more comfortable and confident with my job and after this experience it is fitting to mention that I will probably be giving more tours.

This week was very exciting, and it concluded with an opportunity to volunteer at the Capital Area Food Bank. I am glad to be able to give a portion of my time to help the D.C community and I look forward to more volunteer opportunities. Overall, I am enjoying my time in D.C. I enjoy sharing my experiences with my mom even more. I love that I am exploring that a future in D.C. is in my potential and it makes my mom proud. My mom is now telling me that I should become president someday! I will continue to learn and explore as much as I can for this opportunity will get me closer to respond to my mother's wishes to someday become president of United States of America.

