

Elizabeth Castro, HEP/CAMP Intern

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What an incredible first week. It is now Saturday and it's been one week since I said goodbye to my family at the airport. I had just finished my finals and packed my things that day before. During the first few days, I felt like I had simply moved to a different part of Seattle, one that I had never been to before, and even when I saw the White House the first night, I had trouble believing that what my eyes were seeing was real. Walking by Capitol Hill and the Supreme Court has helped me start to grasp the sheer immensity of the U.S. Government.

I have loved our training with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. They are an incredible, smart group of Latinos. I have never met anyone from Guatemala, Cuba, Republica Dominicana, or Puerto Rico. It has helped me value our beautiful diversity as a Latino family. We also got some business cards, etiquette, public speaking, and CHCI alum panel information.

Wednesday was an incredible day, Patrick took us to a small church and we didn't know exactly what we were doing until we walked in. Thankfully, we had done some research as a group the day before on the immigration bill that is sitting in Congress right now. As soon as I walked in the room and saw it was full of people fighting for our slogan, "Stop Separating Families," I started to cry because I remembered all of my experiences of those hurt by our broken immigration system. I relived some of those emotions and remembered the faces of the people this has affected in my life. I felt empowered talking to the president the United Farm Workers (UFW) Arturo Rodriguez, because he truly knows our issues as farmworker communities. He knew where Tri-Cities was and that we have a radio station dedicated to Cesar Chavez. When I told him that my father has been working in the same apple orchard for over twenty years, I saw the understanding in his eyes. Arturo is someone who knows the issues, and has given his life career to this cause. We geared up to visit Congressmen McCarthy and Boehner in their offices as a part of an act of civil disobedience along with the United Farm Workers and other organizations who came from around the country. Many press members were there capturing the event as we marched to the Representatives' offices. I talked to a gentleman who has been with UFW for over twenty years. I loved his passion and enthusiasm; he came all the way from California! I also admired the strength of the teens who were open to being arrested.



Patrick was there welcoming all of us from the moment we arrived at the airport. I don't know how I can thank him and his wife, Betsy, for everything they have done for us. He was behind the scenes organizing everything with CHCI, our arrivals, taking care of how we were doing, and making sure we were finding our way. He made DC seem less scary. As soon as he left on Friday and we got on the metro, we felt the difference. There was some sort of accident and the metro had to stop and wait on the rails. As we sat there, getting all sweaty and a bit claustrophobic, we were like, "Where is Patrick?"



I LOVE my fellow HEP/CAMP Interns, I could not pick a better group to spend this summer with. We crack each other up so much and we have already given people nicknames for random little things. We have had adventures venturing (and getting lost) on the way to Walmart over by Chinatown. And yesterday was unforgettable as we visited the Lincoln Memorial and the Monument at night.

I also enjoyed the special opportunity to actually go INSIDE the offices of some of the Senators and Representatives that my fellow interns are working with. It's humbling to realize the seriousness of these places that make such important decisions. In every single office, someone was there offering support to all of us as we go through the summer. We already have a huge list of places we need to go. Our last stop was the Department of Education. I had met the director of the Office of Migrant Education, Dr. Ramirez, before. But this time she will essentially be my boss. I read her book, *Dulcified* and it was one of the biggest reasons why I applied to the HEP/CAMP Internship. It's one of



those books that inspires you, makes you laugh and cry, and is a reminder of the importance of working in the field of Education. The group from the Office of Migrant Education (OME) we met so far seems super down-to-earth, funny but also extremely dedicated to the work that OME is doing. I know that I am in for a full job this summer and Pat mentioned that I can also delve into some of my own research ideas as

well.

On Ariana's birthday, we headed to Johnny Rockets. The waiters even sang Happy Birthday to her!! I am so thankful my dad bought me a camera because we got some great pictures. We're off to enjoy this weekend and work on MONDAY!

