

## **Lupe Perales**

### **Week Eight - My Final Days of This Incredible Opportunity!**

It is hard to believe that my internship in Washington D.C. has come to an end. I have explored and learned so much. From eating flowers, to the fascinating monuments, and experiencing the functions of a Senator's office. Washington D.C. challenged me to step out of my comfort zone. I had to learn to be proactive to make the most towards developing my networking through all of the great people that I was able to meet. I met wonderful individuals that have now become great friends and family. I know these friendships will last because of the common interests that we discovered that we share, including strong motivation and determination to reach our American Dream.



**Interns who will become future leaders of America!**

Monday through Wednesday was spent at the Department of Education. All of the HEP/CAMP interns attended the HEP/CAMP Annual Directors Meeting. I was honored to have been able to assist all of the directors from across the country who made my internship experience possible. Listening to the staff deliver their speeches made me aware of all of the programs that exist that are currently serving farmworkers. I never realized how huge of an impact that Programs like HEP and CAMP have on thousands of individuals. Before, I was proud to state that I was a HEP/CAMP intern. Now, I feel even more proud to be amongst people that make such a difference. I hope to make the HEP/CAMP Association proud to have chosen me as one of their interns. One day I hope to be in a position where I will be able to provide assistance to CAMP students as a form of appreciation for what the HEP/CAMP Association has done for me. They provided an opportunity for me to experience Capitol Hill, and in a couple of years I will return determined to advocate for the Latino community at the United States Congress. I am confident that this will happen. I know that many people are advocating for me to thrive and I will work hard to do the same for the next generation!



**Seven interns making a difference!**

Since I spent most of my week at the Department of Education, Thursday became my last day as an intern at the Senate office. I was provided an opportunity to attend a Dome Tour that was incredible and a bit scary because I am afraid of heights. When we arrived at the top of the Capitol Building, I could not believe what my eyes could see. My view was the most beautiful. I became speechless because I was able to see all of Washington D.C. and there was not a better way to say my farewell to this incredible city. Saying goodbye to the interns and to my supervisor was more difficult than I thought. I did not want this experience to end. I have attained so much knowledge from working at the office. I learned how the functions of legislation, the importance of a constituent's voice, and the value of my role as an intern at Capitol Hill.



Such a beautiful view!

I do not have words to describe how thankful I am to have received this unique experience. Life as a farmworker has not only been a challenge, but it has also brought me many blessings, and this internship is one of them. I recognize that there are thousands of people who would give anything to obtain an opportunity to intern at Capitol Hill. This first-hand experience has opened my mind to be able to analyze issues that directly impact the Latino community. Issues that I did not have a full understanding of prior to this experience.

Working in the fields from sunrise to sunset has taught me so much. I have learned to be responsible, to work hard, grit, and most importantly to value and appreciate what I have. Most of my family are immigrants who work in the fields. Since I can remember, my family has always told me to take advantage of the fact that I am a U.S. citizen. They said that farmworkers are allowed to dream, and can better themselves by attending a university as a way to reach the American Dream. I have a dream, and that is to help my family and the Latino community. My family is my biggest support system and my motivation. I know that if I succeed, they will succeed too. Together, my family and I will make a difference that will benefit this country!