

Jose Flores

Weekly Journal 10

On Monday I left D.C. with Giev to go to the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Philadelphia. Giev asked me to join him at the DNC to help him spread awareness about farmworker issues and put pressure on some California policymakers to vote for farmworker overtime rights, a set of rights guaranteed to every worker in the U.S. except farmworkers. When we arrived in Philly, I met Irv Hershenbaum, the first Vice President of UFW. I hung out with him throughout the week and worked mostly beside him as Giev had meetings to attend.



Irv is one of the most unique and interesting persons I have ever met. I am very happy I was able to meet him and have the opportunity to be around him. He is very outgoing and a lot of fun, but he was all business at the DNC. He was there for one purpose and one purpose only: to raise awareness and put pressure on policymakers about farmworker rights. His passion gave him energy and life, which was very contagious. Seeing him talk about farmworker rights energized me and helped me have hope again.

On Monday night, I had the privilege to listen to Michelle Obama speak. Her presence was electrifying as the audience listened attentively to her speech. That was my first time hearing the First Lady speak so it was a real delight to be able to be there to hear her. I also had the pleasure of hearing Senator Bernie Sanders speak. That was my first time hearing him speak as well.

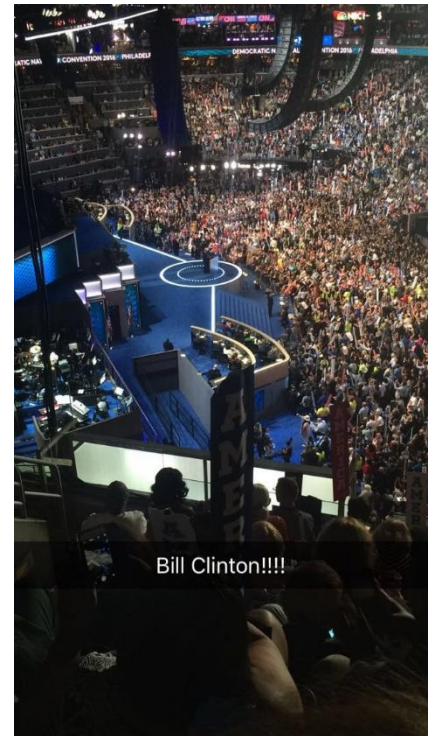
On Tuesday former president Bill Clinton also spoke at the convention. Hearing him talk about the democratic presidential candidate, former First Lady, his wife, Hillary Clinton, was truly a treat. Bill told a beautiful story about him and her that stole the heart of every person in the building.

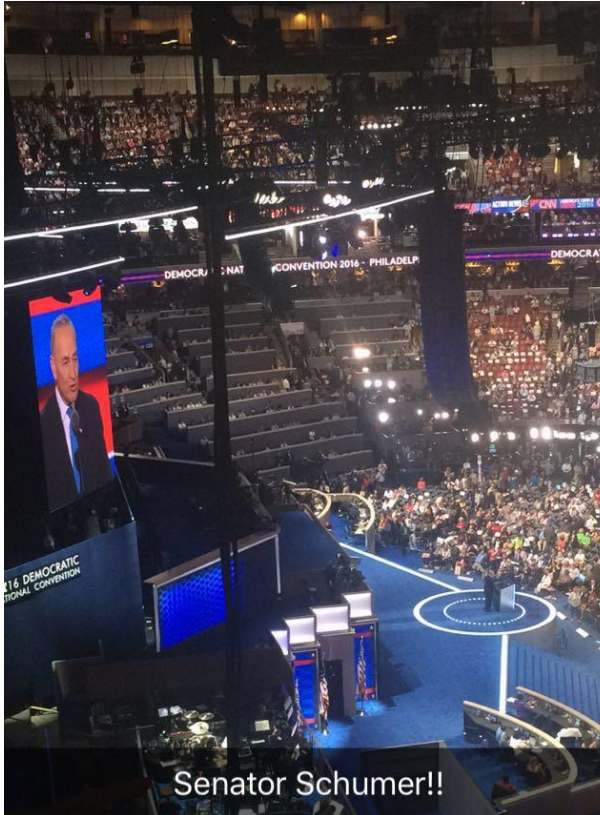
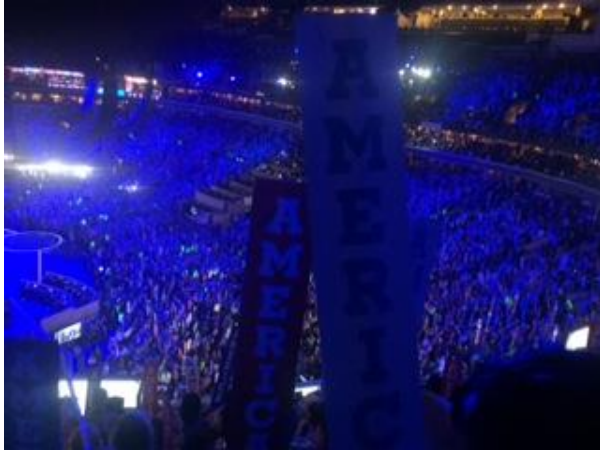
Wednesday night at the convention was very full. The stadium was filled to capacity. It was hard finding a seat, and it is because everyone wanted to see the president speak. Wednesday was the first time I ever saw President Barack Obama, or any U.S. president, in my life. I remember the moments before he came out. I remember the adrenaline pumping through my blood. You can feel the excitement in the stadium. The tension was too much to bear as people were crying in anticipation for the president. I have always liked president Obama. It has been a dream of mine to meet him. When he stepped out onto the stage, the crowd completely went wild! Obama, of

course, proceeded to give a beautiful speech and fired up the crowd. I never felt more ready to contribute to the Hillary campaign than in those moments. As Obama was waving to the crowd at the end of his speech, Hillary made a surprise visit! She came out to the stage with the president and waved with him to the crowd. It was truly a historic moment and a historic convention. I was proud to be a Democrat.

I met amazing people when I was in Philly. I came across the Tampa mayor, Bob Buckhorn, and exchanged a few words with him. I told him about my interest in working for the Hillary office in Tampa and he asked me to email him my resume so that he can put out a word for me. I also met Dolores Huerta, co-founder of UFW and a champion of farmworkers rights. Her work for farmworkers is unparalleled. Her career has evened the playing field for farmworkers and their families. She fought against the many injustices farmworkers face. She and Caesar Chavez are the faces of the fight for farm worker rights.

The DNC was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. So was the DC internship. I would have never thought to have ever have interned for one of the country's top senators in Washington, D.C., the capital of the greatest country in the world, and that I would be a part of a historic national convention. I would have never thought I would have met the people I have met. Just a year ago I was cleaning toilets in my local Burger King and I was picking tomatoes in the fields of North Carolina. All my life my dad has been a farmworker. After my parents split up when I was 8 years old, my dad was homeless for 2 years. My dad, my two brothers and I lived with our uncle. My mom once overdosed on prescription pills. I should not be here, where I am today, but thanks to the help and the sacrifice of my family, of some great friends and mentors, and to the kindness of strangers, I am able to enjoy these remarkable experiences. On behalf of my family, I wish to thank the association for allowing me the opportunity to intern in D.C. for the summer. Their kindness, their generosity, and their desire to improve the lives of others has allowed me this opportunity. It has truly been one of the greatest experiences of my life and I come out a more confident Jose than when I went in. I am more confident that I too can make a difference in the lives of others as the association did for me and my four peers. I come out more hungry to be successful. I am anxious to get back out to the real world and help make it a better place. I know that I alone could not have gotten to where I have gotten. It has been the work of others, like HEP/ CAMP directors, of Dolores Huerta, of President Obama, of my parents, and of some great friends, who helped me succeed, so now it is my turn to give back to my community for they have given me so much selflessly. Again, thank you HEP/ CAMP.





Senator Schumer!!

