

Jasmine Meraz

Week 4

My week started off with the rest of the interns coming into the office, which was amazing because all of them went to public Division I schools like me and two of them were from Oregon State as well. I had the opportunity to help them with anything they needed. Also, I was so excited to start on two projects after spending a majority of time replying to emails and other small tasks. Getting to work on the two projects made me really excited because I've felt that I hadn't been reaching out enough to the people in charge of the areas I am interested in. Everyone in the office is really nice and they gave me the opportunity to work on something new.

Many senate offices don't give their interns the opportunity to shadow their representatives. However, I am one of the lucky interns that get this amazing opportunity. I spent a whole day following my senator and seeing what it's really like to work at the senate and have so many responsibilities as well as commitments to attend. This was a time for me to ask him any questions about Oregon legislation and federal level legislation. I was so excited that I could ask Senator Merkley about issues that I wanted to learn, especially those at the state level.

This week was one of the busiest out of the 3 weeks that I've been here. As some may know, the Orlando shooting broke out this past week and many senators took their voices to the floor to not only show their support but to take action on this issue of discrimination using weapons in the United States. The filibuster that took place on Wednesday evening sparked a lot of attention and Senator Merkley being one senator out of many senators and congressmen /congresswomen that were part of this, received countless emails and phone calls from constituents regarding their opinions on what was said during their speeches. Because of this, I

experienced I had a busy day responding to constituents and hearing their remarks without getting upset of those who I may not agree with. That day I really learned about staying calm and not getting quick tempered because I'm there to help out, not to create more stress.

Aside from work, I along with the other CAMP interns went to a tri-caucus reception that included minority's interns on the Hill (Latino, African American, and Asian & Pacific interns). This was great opportunity to listen to speakers express how the next generation of leaders will be minorities and the difference we will make and experiences we will take back to our communities. The three House Representatives that spoke at the reception were Linda Sanchez (California), Mike Honda (California), and Luis Gutierrez (Illinois). I was fortunate to speak to all three for quite some time and take pictures with them. My favorite was Congressman Gutierrez because he represents the Chicago district and being there only four months ago, it was a place that I fell in love with, and seeing someone who is Latino representing such a big city inspired me.



Linda Sanchez represents the San Francisco district and women and Latinas/Latinx should look up to. As a minority going through the higher education system, sometimes I feel hopeless that my efforts won't go beyond the university or even my community. But Linda showed me that there is no challenge big enough that I can't overcome. She said I can find resources that exist and someone like me can grab those resources to make a difference.