

Jose Flores

Weekly Journal 4

This week is potentially my most successful week here in the internship, and in my career. I feel like I made a number of career moves this week that have the potential to be big steps forward in my career.

On Tuesday I met up with Yesenia Chavez, a Legislative Assistant for U.S. Representative Raul M. Grijalva (AR-03). I met Yesenia at a previous event, the LGBT, Latinos & Elections Panel, where we both agreed to grab some coffee to continue our talk. We grabbed some coffee in Longworth and were able to continue that night's conversation. I told her about my migrant lifestyle and about why I wanted to enter the world of politics. She was amazed by my story, and said she would like to be a resource for me for when I try to come back to D.C. This connection was one of the few that I made that can really help me as I attempt to begin my career on the hill.

Shortly after meeting Yesenia, I met with Veronica and Morgan, two staffers in the office I work in. Both Veronica and Morgan were CHCI fellows and so we were able to quickly make that connection. Veronica also asked me to help her with a small research project. She focuses on healthcare and education and was currently doing research on a H.R. 5003, a House bill known as "The Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act". She asked me to attend a press event that was going to be hosted by SNA with guest speakers Representative Bobby Scott (VA-03) and Representative Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01). I was able to create a memo for her about the press event and experience a press event about what I am passionate about: Education and Healthcare.

Veronica also asked me to accompany her and Morgan to escort schoolboard members from New York. We escorted this group to the Capitol where they met and spoke briefly with the one and only, Charles Schumer. That was my first time physically seeing Senator Schumer. Although I could not officially introduce myself to him, I will have my chance to do so on July 29, when all the interns will meet up with him for lunch.

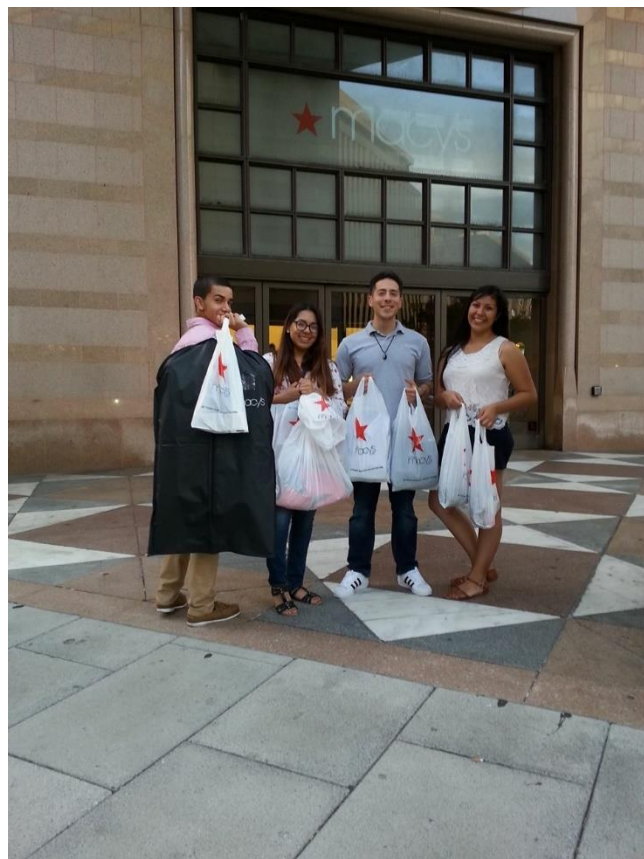


The interns and I were able to meet with Mike Lynch, Schumer's Chief of Staff. During this lunch meeting, we learned about what it means to be Chief of Staff and what it all entails. Mike is a very interesting person; he never thought of himself of going into politics until he did campaign work and learned that he loved it. Even then, he did not see himself working on the

hill; however, with Mike, it was about meeting the right people and being at the right time at the right place. Mike has been an integral part of Schumer's success and I thoroughly enjoyed his story. His story taught me that we do not have to know what we want to be in life, because we can never know where life will take us. He taught me to keep my options open and take advantage of any opportunities that may come my way.

On Wednesday evening was the Summer Tri-Caucus Reception, which hosted and honored the summer interns of CHCI, CBC, and APAC. A couple of Congressmen and a Congresswoman spoke at the event, including Representative Luis Gutierrez, Representative Mike Honda, and Representative Linda Sanchez. I was also able to meet many interns of the other organizations and expand my network. Again, these new connections may prove to be crucial as I continue forward in my career.

Thursday was the craziest day. After Congressman Murphy's filibuster that lasted 15 hours on Wednesday into Thursday morning, gun control was on the nation's mind, or at least on New York's. The filibuster ended with Republicans agreeing with the Democrats to hold votes for two gun control amendments. The NRA, who focuses on protecting American's 2nd amendment rights, called people to call their Representative's and Senator's offices. So Thursday was mayhem on the phones. The phones were ringing non-stop as people called to voice their opinions on the issue of gun control. On that day I fielded over 250 calls in a little over 3 hours. Although it sounds like a lot, it was great to see democracy in action as the people voiced their opinions and to be a part of it.



Friday as usual is for CHCI programming.

Our first speaker could not show up so our first event was not until 10:30 with Rey. With Rey, we did an activity that required us to think about the 3 most influential moments/ people in our lives. I paired up with Cesar Fierros and we shared our 3 items. This activity allowed me to learn more about Cesar. After this, a few CHCI alumni came in to speak with us. They talked to us about their CHCI experience and how they benefited from the program. I enjoyed listening to their stories. I also felt good to see people like me being successful in their fields; it motivates me to continue working hard as I too can be successful as they are.

The next activity we discussed sex, and we included abortion in the discussion as well. Sex is a taboo in the Latino community; it is not talked about much, which leads to great

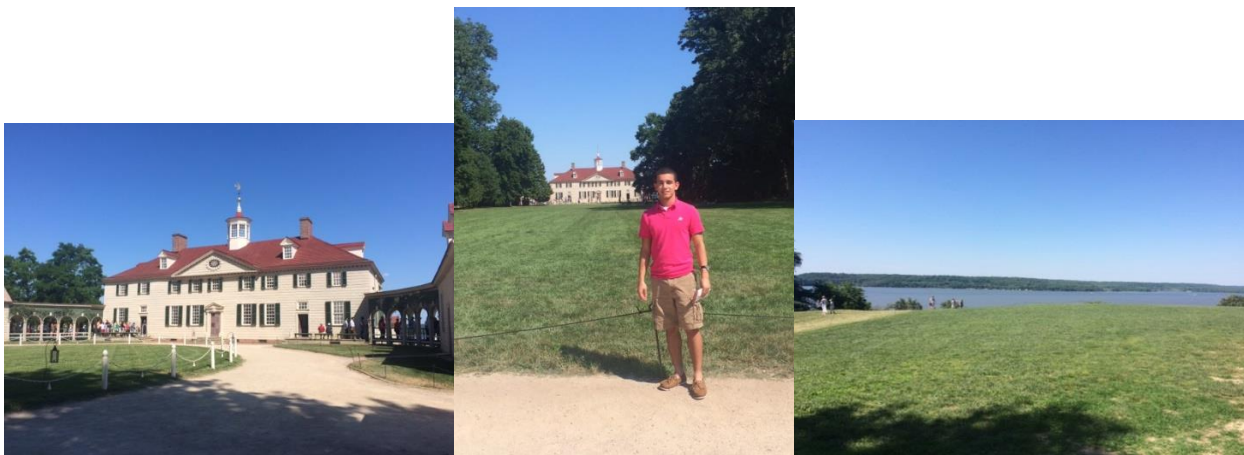
misunderstandings and to harsh criticisms to those who deviate from the norm. Our discussion was led by Ariel. Ariel was great; very energetic and the perfect person to speak to a room full of young adults about sex and abortion.

Saturday was a day for me to catch up on sleep, do some house chores and work on some stuff that needed to be taken care of. I was able to buy a new suit with a gift card that Macy's graciously gave us. We went out to a nice restaurant where there was Latin music in the background. It was a pleasant night and it was nice to hang out with other CHCI interns.

On Sunday my mentors came to visit me. We visited the Air and Space museum at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center by Dulles International. It was so cool seeing the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, the Enola Gay, and Discovery; these representing some of human's greatest achievements, although the Enola Gay would be controversial to place as a great achievement. Nonetheless, it is a part of human history.



We also visited George Washington's house on Mount Vernon. His mansion is atop a hill with a gorgeous view of the Potomac River. It was a surreal experience, as I was able to visit the home of one of America's founding fathers, our first president, and one of the most important individuals of American history.



As I begin my 5th week, I am excited for what still lies ahead for me.