

Perla Week 5

On Wednesday I attended a meeting with Giev Kaskooli who is the VP for UFW. We talked about California's new law, which was placed into effect and aids farmworkers. The law states that farmworkers must have a break every two hours in a shaded area, along with fresh water and clean bathrooms. When we heard these new regulations, many of us CAMP interns mentioned the fact that Washington State doesn't have that. Looking back at my time in the fields, I remember feeling exhausted by the heat and having to continue working. Our shade from the sun consisted of a hot van, which had been sitting in the sun all day. Sitting in the van allowed for protection from the sun, but was difficult to breathe inside. In terms of our water supply, it was placed on the same carrier that the portable bathroom was moved by. It's difficult to understand why, in a country where we pride ourselves on equality and being progressive, basic things like clean water and bathrooms are not required everywhere. In my Chicano Studies class at UW, I learned that farmworkers are exempt from the Fair Labor and Standards Act, Giev says this is due to racism and other negative factors. I brought up the Supreme Court and asked if there was any possible way that the Fair Labor and Standards act could be reassessed for being unconstitutional, he replied that he has a team working on just that. There have also been cases where people are damaged by pesticides, like my father. The purpose of pesticides is to kill pests that are eating away at the crops, and to think that my parents breathed those chemicals in each day, especially my father who was the one spraying pesticides on a daily basis, is heartbreaking. It is clear to see that the effects of the fields can be life threatening, my father for instance, was diagnosed with double pneumonia in January of 2014. He was placed under a medically induced coma for a couple months, had three ribs removed, and multiple surgeries. My father to this day still has difficulty breathing and takes multiple medications as a result. The doctors were very adamant about the fact that his working conditions were the catalyst for his condition. Upon my return to Washington I would like to find a way to bring light to these issues. There are many people who lack the knowledge on the terrible effects of the pesticides. I would like to find a way to create preventative measures for these workers as well. In the state of Washington, a farmworker dies in the fields every 16 months, which is tragic. Giev has plans to create a meeting with Senator Patty Murray and speak of the importance of creating safer conditions for farmworkers later this month. Last year I had the opportunity to



meet with Murray, and ask for her continuous support regarding the GEAR UP program, and earlier this year Patty Murray created a video for us CAMP Scholars in which she showed her support for the program. It is nice to know that she has supported programs, which have been instrumental to my success in both high school and college; I truly look forward to the conversation with her regarding



farmworker rights. Ultimately, I would like for this law to pass nationwide not just in Washington State. On Thursday I had the opportunity to attend a youth forum at the White House. The forum was on AAPI, where we learned of issues regarding Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. I learned that there are territories that are owned by the United States like Guam and the Virgin Islands that are facing troubles



due to global warming. I also learned about issues such as mental health and the model minority myth. There are still many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders that need support, and I am glad to hear that the White House Initiative for Asian American and Pacific Islanders is working hard to support these individuals. When we broke down into smaller groups it was nice to hear the efforts of the students and that they are working hard to help others at their schools as well. An interesting fact that I learned is that Asian Americans are also DACA recipients. In the past, whenever I heard talk on DACA, it was always Hispanic students that I heard being brought

up as the recipients, so it was wonderful to hear there is a diverse set of people that are able to use this legislature. It was also neat to hear about another White House



Initiative and their efforts to create a positive difference. On Friday after CHCI, I went to a White House Initiative intern's home where we celebrated a fellow intern's upcoming birthday as well as had a farewell party for her since she is leaving next Thursday. It was especially fun because we were able to do all the cooking ourselves. We made chicken enchiladas, guacamole, and I helped by making a pico de gallo. The meal was excellent and I enjoyed being surrounded by such amazing people. Our boss Emmanuel Caudillo also

joined us for dinner. On Saturday I was able to help at a volunteering event called *So Others May Eat*, the organization works hard to help homeless people in the community who are going through some sort of crisis. It felt great to know that I was helping make a difference in the community. The CHCI interns and CAMP interns



gathered together to help make the Jordan Building backyard look it's best! Afterwards a couple interns and I went to a Thai Restaurant where I tried for the first time, Pad thai, it was delicious! On Sunday I went to museums and took a walk around the Washington monuments. Overall a great week filled with great memories!