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Summer 2013

Internship with Congressman Joaquín Castro (TX-20)
Washington, D.C.

I spent 9 weeks of my summer in Washington, D.C. as an intern in Representative Joaquín Castro's office. Representative Castro is a freshman Congressman, and currently serves on the Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Foreign Affairs. Congressman Castro represents just over half of San Antonio and its suburbs, which is the twentieth district of Texas.

I worked from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays on the Hill, fulfilling a wide range of duties that varied from day to day. There were six interns in my office. We rotated seating every day, with two interns at the front desks and four interns in the back room. When I was assigned to work in the front I was expected to sort the newspapers in the morning, sort and organize all papers and mail, and answer the phones. The front desk interns were also expected to greet constituents and guests that entered. I loved being in the front because I enjoyed meeting constituents that were absolutely thrilled to be on the Hill visiting the Congressman's office. I also worked closely with the Congressman's scheduler everyday. I organized every invitation, meeting request, and speaking request in date order. I then organized them by request details and created a document for the chief of staff, scheduler, and Congressman to read. They would then decide what the Congressman would be able to attend. It was amazing to see how many requests the Congressman got. He was invited to so many events and galas, and was also invited to be keynote speaker at events and conferences at Princeton and Stanford. I also worked with the legislative assistants and legislative director. I researched legislation pertaining to what the Congressman would be voting on that day, such as the Farm Bill and

amendments pertaining to Sexual Assault in the Military. I was also able to sit in on meetings with lobbyists and constituents. I attended several briefings on education, an area of interest to me, for the legislative assistants as well. My favorite staff member to work with was the press secretary. At the beginning of the summer, the press secretary asked me to be in charge of the Congressman's YouTube page. I cut videos and uploaded them to YouTube. I made sure they had the right tags so they could gain exposure and the Congressman's interviews with networks such as CNN and MSNBC could be seen. I also helped the press secretary fix the Congressman's webpage, making it easier for constituents to maneuver. My absolute favorite thing to do was attend press conferences with the Congressman. The way in which he speaks and enjoys what he does is truly inspirational. I enjoyed taking pictures and creating collages for his Twitter and Facebook, as well as writing captions about the things he did on a regular basis. The press secretary invited all the interns to a fundraiser for Wendy Davis in D.C. since my Congressman and his twin brother were on the August cover of Texas Monthly with her. I was able to meet Wendy Davis and speak to her about the important role of women in politics and the struggle it has been for her to pass legislation throughout her years in the Texas legislature.

As an intern in Representative Castro's office, I was also asked to give tours of the Capitol. I went to Capitol tour training and learned everything about the history, architecture, and artwork in the capitol. The interns in my office would take turns giving tours, and since so many of our constituents were excited to visit our office we each had about two tours a week. I enjoyed meeting constituents from San Antonio and hearing their stories. I even gave a tour to one of my childhood friend's uncles and his two little

daughters. Another aspect of my internship I really enjoyed was the Summer Intern Lecture Series for Hill interns. I was able to hear speakers like New York Times columnist David Brooks, NASA administrator Charles Bolden, and Senator Ted Cruz. Stephen Colbert was scheduled to speak one day, and one of the interns and I went to wait in line two hours beforehand. All the senate side interns and house interns came to see him. However, the auditorium wasn't big enough for all the interns. We found ourselves stuck in the middle of a mob of Hill interns and we eventually didn't get to stay in the auditorium because we didn't have our own seats! My friend Hira and I decided we would just find Stephen Colbert and take a picture with him, and that's what we did! We found him on the third floor of our building just being goofy. He loved our perseverance!

The skills I developed throughout my time as an intern this summer are priceless. I learned to effectively work with a large amount of coworkers in a small space. I improved my writing and research skills because I was asked to complete memorandums in a small amount of time. What I learned most from my time working in Congressman Castro's office was the importance of hard work and dedication. I learned to work as a team with all the other interns. The tasks I underwent played a vital role in helping the Congressman get through his extremely busy days. I truly experienced a great deal throughout my summer in Washington, D.C. I am very grateful to have been given the chance to be a part of a great staff that works for one of the most well respected freshmen Congressman. This internship on the Hill opened so many doors for me. I learned a great amount about the legislative process and got to see history unfold with my own eyes.