Legislative Intern at the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations

This summer I had the privilege to spend ten weeks interning as the legislative intern for the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations in Washington D.C. This office is responsible for presenting the Episcopal Church’s stance on international, domestic and immigration policies to U. S. lawmakers. This is done through letters to members of Congress, social media, and meetings with Congressional staff. During my time in the office my responsibilities varied from attending Congressional briefings, running social media, and writing action alerts for all the policy analysts.

This summer I was able to work closely with Patricia Kisare, the international policy analyst, Jayce Hafner, the domestic policy analyst and Lacy Broemel, the refugee and immigration policy analyst/communications coordinator. This was an enriching experience that allowed me to learn about all the areas of work in the office. I met with each of them and was assigned different tasks and projects to be a part of, which gave me the opportunity to expand my interests, and working in each of these fields also allowed me to find new passions.

My tasks with Patricia Kisare in international policy consisted of attending interfaith coalition meetings on world hunger, attending meetings and briefings on the hill, collecting Episcopal Church policy on international relations, and summarizing the Women, Peace & Security Act. Working on international issues showed me how incredibly close the Episcopal Church works with organizations around the world. By working on these tasks I was able to develop better research and writing skills. I also gained firsthand experience with the faith
community and observed how they come together and work on advocating for significant issues in our country and around the world.

My tasks with Jayce Hafner in domestic policy consisted of attending bi-weekly meetings, Congressional briefings, and writing memos on legislation such as the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. Attending meetings and Congressional briefings on Arctic Refuge legislation and Sentencing Reform gave me an insight in how faith organizations come together to lobby and advocate for diverse issues. Working on domestic policy issues not only improved my communication skills through networking at meetings and expressing our concerns to congressional staffers about the issues we were advocating towards, but also I ameliorated my writing skills through many drafts of legislative memos and notes.

My tasks with Lacy Broemel in refugee and immigration policy consisted of both communications work and refugee and immigration work because she was moving from the position of communications coordinator to refugee and immigration policy analyst. Working with Lacy provided me with knowledge about the communications work that the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations is involved with, be it social media or newsletters on our website. Working in communications advanced my knowledge of communications and how it is carried out in a faith based and governmental relations office. Additionally, I learned to work with Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)—(a set of codes inserted in a file intended for display on a World Wide Web browser page) and posted newsletters and action alerts for our website and email system. This aspect of my work made me realize how much I enjoy communications and opened up a new area of interest for my future. Furthermore, I worked on
refuge and immigration projects, attended advocacy committee meetings such as the Refugee Council USA (RCAUSA), attended talks with the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, and lastly wrote action alerts for our website about *Fair Day in Court for Kids Legislation*. Working in this area of policy led me to become more passionate about refugee and immigration issues and enhanced my writing, communication and research skills through the acts of attending meetings, writing action alerts and researching different legislations.

Overall this internship was an incredible and enriching experience. I was exposed to different aspects of policy and was able to have first hand experience on how the faith community advocates for issues of importance to our communities. Having the opportunity to work on so many areas of policy was eye opening and opened new doors for my future. Most importantly, this experience allowed me to see myself in many areas of faith based policy work. Even though I came into this internship with little knowledge of what I wanted to do in my future career, I left with a discovery of new passions and an array of options which I had not previously thought about, and I also acquired new skills that will help me in my future career.

Lastly, I would like to thank the donors of the Tonya Public Affairs endowment for funding this internship and allowing me to have this incredible experience. It would not have been possible without your support.