

This summer, I worked in the United States House of Representatives for the Assistant Democratic Leader, Mr. James E. Clyburn of South Carolina's 6th district. This district encompasses central and eastern South Carolina, including parts of my hometown, Charleston. Congressman Clyburn has served in Congress since 1993 when he was elected co-President of his Freshman class. He was also Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1999, House Democratic Caucus Vice Chair in 2002, Chair of the Democratic Caucus in 2005, and House Majority Whip in 2006. Congressman Clyburn has, and continues to be, an advocate of the people. To echo President Obama's sentiments, Congressman Clyburn is "One of a handful of people who, when they speak, the entire Congress listens." It was an honor to intern in Mr. Clyburn's office this summer.

My time on Capitol Hill exposed me to the functions of the legislative process and the actors who comprise it. One of my main duties as an intern was responding to constituents who called to voice a concern, communicate a comment, or inquire about visits to Washington, D.C. It was my responsibility to respond to these calls. This task was one of my most interesting, yet difficult, jobs. This summer was an incredibly difficult time for Congress; hard choices were made. Therefore, many of my interactions with constituents were regarding issues such as the Confederate rebel flag debate, TPA/

TPP, and the Iran nuclear deal. It was my responsibility to listen to all inquiries, complaints, and concerns, and to pass them along to the appropriate staff member who handles the respective issues.

I also had the opportunity to attend various briefings sponsored by members of Congress, delving into issues ranging from pre-school expulsion rates to the place of generic medication in modern America. These opportunities allowed me to learn more about issues affecting Americans of all ages and backgrounds. In many of these meetings, I had little to no knowledge of the topic prior to attending the briefings. For example, little did I know that 10.4% of pre-K teachers expelled at least 1 child in the past year due to behavioral problems, and many of these expulsions may be attributed to the amount of support offered to the teacher. Simply put, teachers who offer behavior consultation and have a positive relationship with their students' parents are less likely to resort to immediately expelling the child and, rather, offer positive reinforcement as a way to help improve the child's poor actions. As I learned during this briefing, these expulsion rates prove to cause a domino-effect in their consequences. For example, in many ways, expelling a child often means also expelling a parent from work. Equally important, pre-school expulsion, which is often phrased as the "capital punishment for schools," dramatically affects a child's development and further inhibits positive

behavioral growth. This briefing exemplifies one of the many issues I learned about during my internship, and it taught me the value behind collaboration and reaching across party lines in order to address issues affecting all Americans-- regardless of age.

In regards to career goals and personal development, this internship helped me discover that my talents are best utilized in high-energy and fast-paced environments. There was never a dull day in the office; there is always legislation to learn about, issues to become educated on, and news to read on an everyday (if not hourly) basis. My time on the Hill allowed me to interact with people on a daily basis, something that I very much enjoy doing, and intend to do in whatever job I settle into in the coming months.

I thank Sewanee and the Tonya fund for giving me the opportunity to begin my career in public service in Washington, DC this summer. It was an honor to dedicate this summer interning for a man who has dedicated his entire life to public service and for the betterment of the South Carolinians of his district. I would not have been able to gain such experiences without Sewanee and the Tonya Public Affairs fund and support. Thank you! YSR and EQB.