

Anna Black

Congressman Bob Goodlatte

2309 Rayburn House Office Building

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This summer, I had the opportunity to intern with my Congressman, Congressman Bob Goodlatte. Congressman Goodlatte represents the Sixth District of Virginia and is the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. He is a conservative representative and one of his biggest goals is to create more jobs and to promote economic growth. As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Congressman Goodlatte oversees matters such as immigration reform, terrorism, crime, and more. He has been in office for over 20 years and has since become the head and member of several subcommittees in Congress. He is a great leader on the Judiciary Committee and is an excellent representative to have.

Because I had heard so much about Congressman Goodlatte and the roles that he plays, I was somewhat intimidated on my first day of my internship. As expected, it was very overwhelming. When I arrived to the office, I met the intern coordinator who I had been emailing throughout spring semester. She immediately sat me down and handed me a binder, which contained every single thing I needed to know about how the office functioned. The binder was thick and full of information, names, steps and rules, etc. We went through each page together and with the two other interns. Once we completed a quick lesson, she took us to our

desks. During this time, congress was not in session so the day was pretty slow, which allowed us to become familiar with all of our duties.

Because there were two other interns with me, many of the tasks we were given could be shared amongst us. We each had our own station with a telephone, notepad, pens, and a computer. It was crucial each of us had a phone and computer for when constituents called the office. It was important for us to always answer the phone on the first ring so staff in the office would not have to interrupt their work and take the calls. The computer system allowed us to keep track of every phone call and log in any comments or concerns a constituent may have. The system is very well organized and it was important that we made sure each of us had access to both a phone and computer in the event of multiple calls.

Other than answering phones and logging the comments and concerns in to the computer system, we had many other duties. A normal day consisted of distributing newspapers to staff, sorting mail, running errands, taking notes at press conferences, giving tours of the capitol, etc. Running errands was always fun to do. It gave us some time out of the office and it also gave us the chance to explore the congressional buildings more and familiarize ourselves with them. One of my favorite errands that I had was to take forms to the Republican Cloak Room. On the way to the Cloak Room, I got to ride an indoor train that takes representatives, staff members, and interns from the House Office Buildings to the Capitol. What intrigued me so much about the Cloak Room is that it is Members Only. When I ring the doorbell to the room, someone opens the door and takes the papers from me and I am not allowed to enter. It was always such a mystery to me! I think some of

the staff members in Congressman Goodlatte's office thought it was funny how much I enjoyed going there.

While running errands gave us a break from other tedious tasks, answering phones allowed us some excitement as well. When congress was in session, calls were constantly being made in to the office. I always enjoyed answering calls and speaking with constituents and non-constituents. Hearing what they had to say helped me to better understand certain matters and it also gave me the opportunity to do some research of my own about matters I had not yet heard of. While most of the calls pertained to issues being addressed in Congress, some were completely from left field and were at times entertaining. I really enjoyed interacting with people on the phone. It was great practice for me and helped me to also better communicate via telephone.

While I only gave a few tours of the Capitol, I really enjoyed learning fun facts about the building. I had the opportunity to give a tour to my parents and I know they were impressed with what I had learned – like how the Statue of Freedom always faces east because “the sun never sets on freedom”. Not only did I gain a wealth of knowledge by studying facts about the Capitol, giving tours also helped me with my self-confidence. I had to project my voice, lead a group of people, have the confidence to keep their attention and inform them of facts they had either not known, or known prior to the tour. It was always scary giving a tour at first, but after a few moments, my confidence helped me to successfully show groups around the Capitol.

Overall, my experience in Congressman Goodlatte's office was a great one. I enjoyed getting to know all of the staff and I especially enjoyed meeting Congressman Goodlatte. I now have a greater sense of knowledge on how Congress itself functions. This internship allowed me to meet so many new people I would have never met otherwise. I learned about issues such as immigration reform and other current events while I was in the office. I strongly believe that this experience helped me to become a more confident person and a more knowledgeable one as well.