

Wellman Hill Summer 2017 Reflection

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Congressman Tim Walberg (MI-07), District Office Intern; Jackson, Michigan

From May until August, I had the opportunity to work in the district office of my Congressman, Rep. Tim Walberg. I was enthusiastic to learn more about Congress and to see representative government at work. I am grateful to the Wellman Hill program for giving me the opportunity to pursue this adventure.

Throughout the summer, I assisted with many facets of the district office operations. There was no such thing as a “typical day” for me. One of my responsibilities was answering incoming calls from constituents. There was never a dull moment during these conversations. I quickly learned that patience, compassion, and empathy were necessary skills in government work. Other times, I would be helping the case workers. It was a pleasant surprise to me that our office had three case work specialists. Their job was to help constituents with specific federal concerns, from problems with the IRS to navigating Medicare/Medicaid. I became convinced that the people on Congressman Walberg’s staff were miracle workers. Constituents that called with problems received immediate attention to their needs and in most cases, a prompt resolution.

Some of my favorite moments were spent planning and attending official events. First, I was tasked with assisting with the annual Job Fair in Jackson. It was exciting to connect with local employers throughout the process. I felt fortunate to be working with an office that focused on supporting economic growth in our communities and helping constituents find jobs. Later in the summer, I went through a similar process for a Veterans Fair in Monroe.

On Memorial Day, Congressman Walberg was in my hometown of Saline, Michigan. He was a special guest, serving as the Grand Marshal of the Memorial Day Parade. In the crowd, a woman asked if he would consider doing a townhall event in Saline. Without hesitation, he agreed. I appreciated that the Congressman prioritized responsiveness to constituents above all else. Within about a month, I was at the Saline townhall event, helping to set up and assisting the numerous constituents in attendance.

Back at the office, I truly bonded with my co-workers. Despite the tense political climate, they were very patient and pleasant people. Often the news or C-SPAN was playing in the background. As a big announcement or news alert flashed across the screen, the interns would glance towards the phones, waiting for them to start ringing off the hook. While there were stressful moments like these, this internship gave me real perspective about representative government.

My summer spent working in Congressman Tim Walberg’s office was a challenging, yet rewarding experience. It reaffirmed my sincere interest in serving others, and exposed me to realities of federal government at a local level. I am thankful for the generous Wellman Hill gift that enabled me to have this incredible summer.