

As I sat in my car on my journey home from Boy's State, I can remember the sense of relief that I felt knowing that I had not only survived a week with over 140 other intelligent and ambitious people, I had succeeded in making it to Boy's Nation. It felt as if the hardest part of my Boy's State/Boy's Nation experience had been dealt with because I felt the hardest part would be getting in. I was sadly mistaken.

Upon arriving in Washington, DC, the level of talent was completely off the charts. I met guys who worked for their Senators in Congress during the summer, owned their own businesses, and ran and worked on political campaigns. In life, especially in high school, it's rather easy to think very highly of oneself and become arrogant, by the end of Boy's Nation, if there is one thing that I feel that I learned above all else, it was humility. The realization that a former President once stood in our shoes made me realize that I most likely stood in the presence of future Presidents, Cabinet Secretaries, Senators, and other Washington, DC power players. The influence Boy's State/Boy's Nation has had on current leaders of our country was something that became evident immediately during our week. Walking through the halls of Congress during our Capitol Hill day, Congressional Staffers would approach us and tell us stories about attending Boy's State/Boy's Nation. Later in the summer when I was flying home from a family vacation, my seat happened to be right next to Senator Jeff Merkley's. As we discussed what I did this summer, Boy's State/Boy's Nation came up and he revealed to me that he himself had been a participant in Boy's State many years ago and had longed to attend Boy's Nation as well.

Finally, out of the entire Boy's Nation experience, the best and most enjoyable part of the whole week was the fact that we all got along. When there are over 98 boys from 49 different states, it is only natural that political beliefs would be just as varied as the diverse geographic locations we all came to Washington, DC from. Every single day at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we would get together in the cafeteria and argue about various political topics from the War on Terror to affirmative action. Debate would get quite loud and rowdy, but after everything was said and done, no matter how much we all disagreed, we all remained friends on civil terms afterwards. It was very inspiring to see that maybe our generation will have the ability to go beyond the constant partisan bickering that has gone on for the past several generations.

Boy's Nation was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and hopefully several years from now if I have the opportunity to work in

a Senator's office, I'll be able to approach future Boy's Nation Senator's and tell them about my wonderful experiences this summer. Thank you to all of The American Legion, Department of Oregon, staff and members who made my trip possible this summer, I will never forget it.

Sincerely,

Marshall Kosloff