

Hometown: Utica, NY

College: Utica College, Fall 2009

***1) What made you decide to pursue an internship with Congressman Arcuri?***



I wanted to do something that would hold my attention, be worthwhile and related to what I want to get into-government certainly has all of that. You always need to be building on past experiences and I felt that this was a necessary one for me to have. Especially going forward, if I do go into the law or do go into policy in general, it is an absolute must to actually get in there and know how the government works.

***2) What is one thing you have learned about Congress that really surprised you?***

The most surprising thing, and this being something that I believe you cannot truly appreciate unless you have witnessed it, is the tremendous amount of work and consideration that goes into every issue. What I am drawing all of this from is when I went to the Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearings on human rights. I was so impressed with the level of seriousness with which they discussed their issues. I know, as someone very much interested in the issue of human rights, that these are not issue at the forefront of anyone's agenda. And with that, watching the Chairman and Ranking Member, who absolutely had differing opinions on just about everything discussed, come together and hold a well reasoned, and frankly, a bluntly critical analysis on what was actually going on, really struck a chord with me.

***3) What is your impression of Washington, DC and how does it differ from home?***

I would liken Washington, DC to a bee hive: there is this constant energy, people are constantly going back and forth-flying in, making their contacts or doing their business and then flying out. It seems like everyone is just passing through on business. In DC, you are absolutely defined by what you do, and that is literally how you have to introduce yourself to people. If you don't do something interesting, I suggest you just make something up because you're going to get asked about it and you never have a second chance to make a first impression.

**4) What is something that you have learned that you will continue to use after your internship?**

I would say the process and care with which you log constituent calls. I was definitely aware that people choose to call their congressperson to express their opinion on this issue or that, but I really had no idea about the volume of calls and the intense process that is involved in fielding and sorting them, developing a position or communicating a position in a detailed letter and making sure everyone who calls or writes to express their opinion gets a response in a timely manner.

**5) What do you think is the most important issue for Congress to address?**

To me healthcare and education are the twin branches. It's time; it's been time, with all the capabilities that we have as a nation, financially, to provide equal public education and a minimum standard of healthcare. I don't think it should be mitigated by the system. It's a pretty easy choice. You either believe that everyone should have access to a minimum standard of each or you don't. If you do believe that, then you should do whatever it takes to make that happen and not just say you believe it in theory, then come up with excuses and shoot down every idea anyone has about how to make it a reality. Funding shouldn't be an issue. I don't see it as having to ask everyday people to dig into their own pockets to fund something like this. We are an incredibly wealthy nation who seems to have enough money to fund two separate wars in the Middle East. It is all about prioritizing. Maybe instead of spending billions on new fighter jets and bombs, we should spend it on guaranteeing every American has access to healthcare and a quality education.

**6) What are your plans after graduation?**

Every time I get that question I say the same thing, "There is a difference between knowing the

path and walking it." Truthfully, I have no specific plans after graduation; I only know that I would like to have a job that keeps me interested and actually accomplishes something. In the meantime, I am going to take the tests and look into either graduate or law school. With the economy the way it is, there has never been a better time to stay in school.

**7) *What advice would you give a prospective intern?***

First of all, dress to impress. Although a three piece suit is optional, it is highly suggested. No really, I think the best advice I could give is to really take advantage of your time in Washington. I was fortunate enough to know some people who had interned with a member of Congress or senator in my ear telling me to go do this, or that. Of course, you need to fulfill your duties in the office but get out as much as you can. Go to briefings or hearings that interest you, sit up in the gallery and listen to debate on the floor, visit museums, or get off the Hill and actually see DC. You will only get out as much as you put into your internship, so enjoy it because it goes by quickly.

**8) *Walk me through your first day?***

You know, I really don't remember my first day. There was just so much anticipation that you're still kind of floating through it. This was probably the second day actually, and you get home, sit down and just exhale. "Okay, I got this now. I know what I'm doing."

***9) What is your impression of Congressman Arcuri and how does it differ from before you started your internship?***

I was pleasantly surprised to see the Congressman's warm and engaging manner wasn't just for show; it is really him regardless of who he is around. He always makes a point to say hello to whoever is around no matter how busy he is.

***10) Is there anything you have done or tried in DC that you have never done or tried before?***

I went to the Washington National Cathedral and that was absolutely gorgeous. I loved that. It reminded me a lot of places I have been in Europe. For some reason, you don't see many churches of that sort of magnitude in the U.S. very often.

**11) *Is there any type of food you really miss or something you've had in DC that they don't make quite like at home?***

I totally miss chicken riggies being down here. I don't think I've seen anything that even compares.

**12) *Has anything funny or embarrassing happened to you during your internship?***

We were coming back from a training course in a building down the street that I had never been to before and I had to go directly to the Capitol Visitors Center to shadow a tour. I thought I knew my way. You're going through these tunnels and I tried to exit by going down this hallway and somehow managed to get myself into the Library of Congress. I come across a security guard thinking to myself "Oh man, I know he knows I'm lost," but I continued walking like I knew where I was going. I piddled around the elevators for a while until I gave up, tucked my pride and walked up to him. He sees my intern badge and says, "You took the wrong tunnel didn't you?" He got me turned around and back on my way. I really didn't want to be "that intern."

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