

Simoné McGautha

Dr. Anne-Marie Foley

Civic Leaders Internship

Progress Report 2

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#### A. Two Week Summary

Over the past two weeks, I have gained my Senator's trust on an even much larger scale. He has given me task that I feel should be the tasks of his chief-of-staff. I will talk about that later on in the paper. I also feel more comfortable speaking to him and having conversations with him. I mentioned in my last paper that I was very intimidated around he and the other senators because I never knew what they were talking about. Their language and jargon was all very new to me. Now, I have gotten used to being around them so I am able to pick up on certain words and apply context clues to keep up.

#### B. Professional Activities and Competencies

One task that Senator Holsman has trusted me with is driving his car. At first it did not seem important, but he over the course of a couple of days, he began allowing me to drive constituents around in his SUV. I would drive them back and forth between the Capitol and the governor's mansion. The constituents were mostly women and elders and his reason for doing that is because he wanted to show them the utmost respect. He did not want them to have to walk down hill in heels or in the cold. This was so noble of him to do because it shows that he was not too "large" to show respect to the people who voted for him. This act showed them that he was still humble and down-to-earth. Although he does not run for

another four years, I am sure they will remember this simple act and vote for him next time around.

One thing I have learned as well is that I am always representing Senator Jason Holsman. Especially because all I am to people around the Capitol is, “Senator Holsman’s intern.” So, in the car, I made sure to engage in conversation with the constituents so that they knew that the “kindness” does not just stop with the Senator, it trickles down to all the people working for him—to me, that is the most trust the Senator could have given me; putting the people who voted for him, in my hands.

### C. Processes of Government

One thing I love about working with Senator Holsman is there is something new every day I walk into the office. Between him and the chief-of-staff Dan, I am never bored or not entertained. I never truly know what to expect in the mornings. Several times I would have to give tours to elementary school children. Some days, I would take notes on hearings, other days I would run around the Capitol getting signatures in order to get a bill to pass. Although the House and the Senate both work in the Capitol, it’s easy to forget that they both need one another in order to serve the people effectively. For example, Senator Holsman asked me to speak with Representative Michael Butler (D) on his views related to early childhood education reform. Since I am not totally familiar with policy and how it works, I did not understand why I would need to go talk to a person in the House. Google became my best friend that day; I researched it and found out that nothing can get passed in the Senate if it did not get passed in the House first and vice-versa. Senator Holsman was simply trying to see whom he could get on his side in the house so that he could later ask them for assistance.

### D. Public Policy and Missouri Issues and Challenges

Senate Bill 210 is constantly being amended here lately. SB 210 is a bill that stalls the Common Core Standard from expanding to all school districts around the state of Missouri. The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, the goal is for our communities to be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. However, SB 210 makes it so that the Common Core State Standard does not come into play until all school districts have a minimum of five years to “try out a curriculum on their own.”

For Senator Holsman, this is a problem. He feels as though a failing school district should not have another five years to turn things around. If a school district is failing, it has not been declining out of nowhere; a failure is something that has happened over time, so why give them another five years to fail—it is too big of a risk.

This is another instance in which Senator Holsman showed me that I had his trust and he valued my opinion—he simply asked me what I thought. When he asked me that, I went back and forth in my mind whether or not I should side with him, or “stand up” to him and give him my honest opinion. I said, “I agree with SB 210. I think we should allow the schools time to improve. Is it going to happen over night? No. But if the state intervenes in every situation, we are telling the citizens that we don’t trust them with their own state. And we are telling the schools that we don’t trust them with their children.” Senator Holsman looked very surprised by what I said, and I can’t lie, it scared me a bit. However, he respected it. He replied, “Simoné you’re absolutely right and it’s very republican of you (he laughed).” He