

Michigan in Washington Student of the Week: Isabel Kipke

Name: Isabel Kipke

Hometown: Dexter, MI

Majors: Double Major in Political Science and Gender & Health

Internship Placement: Office of Senator Gary C. Peters (D-MI)

Why did you decide to do Michigan in Washington?

MIW has always been my dream throughout my time at Michigan. I remember sitting in the South Quad dining hall with my older sister during freshman year, creating a plan for how I could fit MIW in my schedule (though I had a different major in mind at the time). I knew this program would combine my love for DC with my interest in politics and give me an edge with internship experience. I walked into my MIW interview thinking that this could potentially be a life-changing experience for me, and I have no doubt that it will be.

What are some of the projects you have been working on at your internship?

The intern duties vary day to day, but as I've learned the ropes of the office, I've been getting new responsibilities. Recently, I have been attending Senate hearings and doing research for constituent correspondence. I'm also trained to give tours of the Capitol to constituents, which I can't wait to start doing!

What elective are you taking and is there anything interesting you have been learning/doing for this class?

I'm taking a class called Political Advocacy and Public Opinion in a Digital Age, which combines public speaking with political policies. We started by learning about different methods of communication and are now applying them in real life. On the first day, we watched this amazing TED talk by Bryan Stevenson that has inspired me to work on my public speaking and persuasion skills.

What has been your coolest moment in D.C. so far?

On the second day of my internship, I was exploring the Capitol and completing the Intern Scavenger Hunt with my new badge. As I was walking through the breathtaking rotunda with my co-interns, we passed Senator Peters right as we were in the center of the dome. It was a surreal moment to walk through the Capitol and share the space with the Senator.

What are you looking forward to for the rest of the semester?

I'm still getting the hang of things here in the District, so I'm looking forward to getting into a rhythm. I'm hoping to feel like a true DC-ite by the time I leave. I also can't wait to visit every monument and museum.

Anything else you want to share?

MIW pairs each student with two mentors from D.C. who are Michigan alums and have careers in areas relevant to the student's goals. One of my mentors shared that she hopes more science students partake in MIW. I think this is so important! Everyone, no matter their interests, should apply to MIW. I promise there is a place in the District for all majors.

