

One Student's Reflections

Capitol Forum definitely changed my perspective on what others around you think. There's a reason why somebody believes what they do. Everybody's point of view originates from somewhere, and Capitol Forum helped me learn to listen and wonder why. That day and a half really made me a listener and respect others a lot more. I believe if you take your views on any subject, and put them together with someone's of the same idea, but from two geographically different places in Illinois, you get a conclusion that makes perfect sense. I can't believe how much a lifestyle can differ from just about 100 miles away. Now if we're talking about half a world away, a few thousand miles, think of how much difference there is. Not only on the same debated topic in thought, but how they experience it in their life. Meeting others really makes you expand your mind on anything, even when meeting somebody else for the first time. When you go into capitol forum with an open mind, it makes your experience a whole lot more enjoyable and worth while.

Freshman year when I attended in 2006, I was scared. Who isn't? Many of the students there in Springfield were juniors or seniors in high school. I guess you get a feeling of how your mindset changes as you mature into adulthood and gain a more "adult perspective" on things, even if you're only a couple years younger than your peers.

As soon as I was told I would be attending Capitol Forum in 2009, I was pumped. I kept saying to myself, this is going to be a life changing experience to remember! And it definitely was. I went in there with all my notes, all the past experience I gained from 3 years before, and of course, with an open mind. I was ready to make a memory of my day and a half there, and indeed I did. I met at least 10 students I talked the whole time with, maybe about 4 students not in my group, which was immigration, who went to the same school as others. We all shared ideas, thoughts, and of course a little about ourselves. We had a lot of similarities of being teenagers and looking forward to college, but our views on today's topics differed slightly. Of course, that was the most interesting part. To find out why and how we thought that way made the experience very worthwhile.

I will always remember participating in Capitol Forum. It may be only a day and a half out of your life, but I gained insight I never thought I could from students just a few miles away. Thinking outside the box, think of how much we could accomplish with students from other states, or even foreign countries! Today, I am in contact with about three students I met from this past year, we chat online occasionally about what's been going on in our lives. Funny as it may seem, Capitol Forum is brought up every time! If I could leave something for the future students that have yet to participate, it would be, come with an open mind, leave with one filled of memories and insight you never thought possible that could be gained from meeting a total stranger.

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Note: This student participated in Capitol Forum as a freshman and again as a senior.