

Intern Corner: My Day with Senator Shaheen



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On Tuesday, April 26, I had the special privilege of shadowing Senator Shaheen for the day, and accompanying her to her committee hearings, meetings and votes. My day began with an Appropriations Subcommittee of Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies hearing chaired and opened by Senator Shaheen. The topic of the subcommittee hearing centered on the Fiscal Year 2023 funding request for the Department of Justice, and the Honorable Merrick Garland, the U.S. Attorney General, was in attendance to answer the questions of the committee and further explain the Department's budget requests. It was incredibly interesting to study the procedural practices of the subcommittee, and it was fun to note the varied ways each Senator approached their questioning time. As a constituent of New Hampshire, it was an especially unique experience to see first-hand Senator Shaheen's dedication to representing her state. She consistently asked after the interests of New Hampshire, while simultaneously juggling and maintaining her prominent leadership role in moderating, opening and closing the hearing.

Next on the agenda was another hearing, which was at the same time as the Appropriations one. When the CJS Subcommittee meeting concluded, I accompanied the Senator to the Foreign Relations Committee hearing to discuss the Fiscal Year 2023 State Department budget. Secretary of State Antony Blinken sat in as the special witness for questioning. I was amazed at how fluidly Senator Shaheen, and a lot of the other Senators who came in during the Foreign Relations hearing, were able to integrate into the atmosphere and ask their prepared questions. The morning hearings really showed me how layered and packed the Senator's schedule really is, to the point where she often needs to step out of committee hearings to address other responsibilities, like pictures with school groups and votes. I was impressed by the ease with which she was able to move between her conflicting commitments, and her ability to adjust and reenter a hearing with little problem.

In the afternoon, I was able to accompany the Senator and one of our staffers to a meeting in her office in the Capitol known as a “hideaway,” which has an incredible view of the national mall. We met with the New Hampshire Hospital Association, to discuss the state of COVID-19 in New Hampshire, and how hospitals could handle increasing rates, infrastructure challenges, and appropriations grants. As an individual with two parents deeply involved in the medical field in New Hampshire, this meeting was engaging on both a personal level and an academic one. Seeing her interact on an individual basis, in a “hideaway” that I hadn’t known existed before, was a really cool experience.

I ended my day by joining Senator Shaheen in the Senate Recording Studio, where she filmed a short video with the help of the communications team and broadcasting staff. I was *incredibly* amazed at how easily she was able to deliver lines. Her public speaking skills were something that I had not ever thought to appreciate until I shadowed her.

Overall, I would say my time shadowing the Senator not only gave me a greater appreciation for how much work she does, but how innate her talent is. Not everyone can be a politician, and not every politician can be as devoted and intelligent as Senator Shaheen. It was definitely the highlight of my internship in her office, and I would not trade the experience I had for any other.